

Hebrews

Bible Commentary 2021

by

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Hebrews Chapter 1

1:1-3

God is the first word in Hebrews. This beginning reminds me of the beginning of Genesis. **Genesis 1:1**, "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" No argument about the existence of God. No logical explanation. All we have is a simple declaration of the truth and reality of historical fact. In the beginning. God. Created.

Also, we can compare this to the gospel of John's opening verses. **John 1:1**, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" No logical explanation or argument here either. Just a simple proclamation of the truth and the reality that God is. God is! And he is a rewarder of those who seek him.

I think we should pattern our gospel preaching after the example we see in the Bible. I think we should simply share God's word with the world.

I've come to the conclusion that faith is not a matter of the mind or intellect, but a matter of the heart. The mind is a convert of what a man believes in his heart.

God spoke to his people in the past through prophets. Does this mean he no longer has prophets who speak his word? Based on my study of the Bible and my experience I believe God still speaks. Anything we hear, however, must be tested by the written word of God. God does not contradict what is in his written word. Everything we hear must be in total harmony and agreement with the written word of God.

We still have prophets. The apostle pointed this out in **Ephesians 4:11**, "*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers*"

The church needs every gift it can get from God. We need men of God who hear the voice of God and who proclaim the word of God without compromise. We need men of God who will turn God's people away from their sin and backsliding. God always had men of God in the house of God who were prophets to the people of God. This never changed.

However, the point the apostle made in this letter was that the Lord Jesus Christ is superior and exalted far above any other prophet who ever lived.

John the Baptist said he himself must decrease, but Christ must increase. John the Baptist was only a man.

However, Jesus is the son of man and the son of God. Jesus is God's Son. He is God the Son. There is a huge difference between men who spoke God's word and the Word of God who spoke to us and lived among us as a man. Big difference.

We should understand this is the main point the apostle was driving at in the book of Hebrews.

He tried to tell the Jews who believed in Jesus that Jesus is exalted above all prophets, all angels, above everything which ever was before. Jesus is exalted above all things.

This is why he immediately went into this outpouring of words where he said that Jesus is "the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, and upholding all things, by whom also he made the worlds". The apostle drove home how exalted Christ is above all things.

Jesus is the express image of God. He is God. He is not an angel. He is not another prophet. He is not merely a teacher, or a preacher, or a faith healer.

Jesus is God incarnate in the flesh. He is one of three persons in the triune God. God is three in one. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus is exalted to the right hand of the Father in heaven. He lives forever to make intercession for us.

God spoke through prophets. He still uses men to preach his word to build, encourage, and comfort the church. However, Jesus is more than a prophet. He is our Lord and Savior.

Remember when Jesus was on the mount of transfiguration with Moses and Elijah. Peter suggested he make three tents for these three great men of God.

But what did God say to Peter and the disciples? **Mark 9:7**, "*And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.*"

This is the message of Hebrews. Jesus Christ is God's son. Listen to what Jesus says to us. He speaks to us. God is speaking right now. Jesus said his sheep hear his voice and follow him. Are you one of the Lord's sheep? Then you should listen to him and follow him.

Peter never forgot that day. **2 Peter 1:18**, "*And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.*" Peter never forgot that he heard the voice of God.

1:4-7

God the Father spoke to God the Son! What does this mean? It means in one verse we have two persons who make up the three persons of God. God is three people in one God. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We can clearly see God spoke to his Son. And his Son was exalted over angels. God's

Son is NOT an angel, as cults deceive people to think. Jesus Christ is not an angel. He is God's Son. He is the only begotten Son of God. Not only is he the Son of God but he is God the Son. God is three in one. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, three in one. To miss this truth in the Bible is deliberate and purposeful delusion and deception.

Why lead people away from this basic truth in the Bible? My opinion is because the enemy tries to disqualify what Christ did at Calvary by convincing people that he was just a man. But if he was just a man then he would not have been sinless. And if he was not sinless then he could not provide a substitute for sin. He had to be a man in order to represent man. But he also had to be God in order to be completely sinless. He was the Lamb of God who took away our sins. If we deny the three in one nature of God we end up denying the atonement of Christ. If anyone denies the atoning work of Christ he is not saved because this is the foundation upon which our sins are forgiven. There is no other way. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Jesus Christ. No one can receive forgiveness of sins except through faith and by receiving the work of Christ on Calvary.

Jesus is not an angel. He is exalted above angels. God never said to an angel, "You are my Son". This verse proves beyond any doubt that Jesus Christ was never an angel and he is not an angel today. Angels are created creatures who serve God. Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son. We should listen only to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why is the apostle making a point about this? The purpose of Hebrews was to prove beyond any doubt that Christ is exalted over angels and over everything in the religious system under Moses and Israel. Everything in Israel and God's law pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Lord Jesus everything in the Old Testament is fulfilled. The Old Testament contained types, figures, and shadows that pointed to and symbolized the reality which is in Jesus Christ the Lord.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. He is returning to this earth at some point in historical future. He will establish his kingdom over the nations. After 1,000 years everything will be completed and finished in the New Jerusalem.

1:8-9

Someone spoke to "the Son". We need to identify who spoke. In the context the one who spoke to the Son was the Father. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God the Father spoke to his Son and he said to his Son, "thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever". God the Father called God the Son "God". The Son is God. The Father is God. The Holy Spirit is God. This is basic doctrine in the Bible. Without this basic understanding of the nature of God it is nearly impossible to understand the atonement, the sacrifice Christ made for us, and what this means.

Everything in creation was built by God and has his fingerprint. We cannot understand the world around us or ourselves unless we first have the knowledge of God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

God the Father declared to his Son that the Son is God and that his throne is forever. We need to understand that the scriptures points to the Messiah, the Son of God (God the Son), and to the kingdom. Jesus will reign and rule over his kingdom. The anointing part in these verses points us to the presence

and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. All three persons in the Godhead, the Triune God, have a part they perform. God is one, and he works in complete harmony as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Do not be led astray by the cult teaching that God was the Father, became the Son, and is now the Spirit. This cult teaching is called modalism and is false.

God is eternal. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God has always been and will always be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The point the apostle made was that Christ rules over a kingdom and Christ is God. The Son of God is king and the Son of God is God the Son. He will reign over an earthly kingdom just as he reigns over the heavenly realm.

The Messianic kingdom is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus is the Messiah which Israel pointed to and will one day receive. They will look on the one whom they pierced, they will mourn, and they will all be saved in one day. All Israel will be saved.

Let us hold fast our faith and focus on the kingdom which is coming. This earthly season is passing away, but there is a kingdom coming which will never pass away.

1:10-12

What God created is temporary. God laid the foundation of the earth. He made the heavens with his hands. However, the earth and the heavens shall come to an end and be changed. This is set in contrast to the Lord himself who never changes. Malachi 3:6, "For I am the Lord, I change not..." The Lord is the same yesterday, and today and forever. Based on this fact in the Bible we must put aside any doctrine that teaches that God changes or evolves. These lies come from cults like Mormons who say God was once a man and became God. This is a lie of the devil. God did not evolve. The Lord does not change. He was always God. He is the Alpha and the Omega, he is the Beginning and the End. He does not change.

God's creation is changing. This world we live in fades away. We do not always see this on a daily basis but we need to let this fact sink in. Our lives are brief in this current season. Our goal is not this temporary life.

Preachers who focus people on the here and now lead people astray. The Lord Jesus and the apostles focused on eternity. The Lord Jesus died for us and redeemed us. After establishing these eternal facts we are taught to look forward to the appearing of the Lord Jesus and his kingdom. We are to live in view of the judgment seat of Christ and his kingdom.

Psalm 90:2, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou are God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

Notice the contrast between what is eternal and what is temporary. This pattern runs all through the Bible. Read **2 Corinthians 4:17-18**. Notice the contrast between the temporary and the eternal. The

entire thrust of the Bible is to get our attention off the temporary and on the eternal life we have in God's kingdom.

Why do mega preachers focus people's attention on the temporary? I believe it is God's wrath on America. I believe it is God's way of allowing people to become hardened in unbelief and apostasy. These mega false preachers are God's wrath on a prideful nation that shakes her fist at God.

The gospel is simple. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again the third day. Everyone who calls on the name of Jesus is saved. Put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life and the forgiveness of your sins.

1:13-14

Here Paul circled back around to angels. He made the point that Jesus Christ is exalted over angels and over the religious system in Israel. That entire religious system, though it was put in place by God, was for the purpose of pointing to the Messiah. Once the Lord Jesus arrived the religious system had fulfilled its purpose. There was no longer any legitimate religious system for animal sacrifice. All this became irrelevant after Christ was raised from the dead on the third day.

Father God never said to an angel, "Sit at my right hand". God the Father said to his Son to sit at his right hand until his enemies were made his footstool. This is what is currently taking place right now. The Lord Jesus is exalted to the right hand of God the Father. God the Father is putting all things underneath the feet of the Lord Jesus. When the Lord Jesus returns all the nations will come underneath his kingdom. The air will be cleansed of the evil influence of principalities and powers of darkness in heavenly places.

Here we see the purpose God made angels. They are ministering spirits sent forth to serve those who will inherit salvation. When the Lord Jesus appears those whom God prepared will be raised up and meet the Lord Jesus in the air and so they shall ever be with the Lord. Angels, in this current day and time, are serving those who are saved, who are being saved, and who will be saved on the day of the Lord.

It will help us avoid a lot of false doctrine if we realize the function of angels, and do not get caught up in the worship or adoration of these creatures who were made to serve those who inherit salvation.

We have another warning about angels in **Colossians 2:18**. *"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind"*.

There is real danger when people get caught up with the supernatural and worship of angels. The danger is losing your inheritance as a Christian. You can lose your reward. This does not mean losing eternal life. It means losing your reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

Do not be led astray by false doctrine which promotes angels or people who want to distract you from the gospel with in-depth promotion of angels and angelic activity.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. He now sits at the right hand of God the Father making intercession for us. He will return again and establish his kingdom over the earth. After 1,000 years everything will be complete in the New Jerusalem.

Hebrews Chapter 2

2:1

There are many exhortations in the Bible to hold onto what we hear. We are exhorted to hold fast. We are to give earnest heed and remember. Part of what churches do on a regular basis is "remembering" the Lord's death until he comes back. We remember what the Lord did for us in his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection. We remember the gospel. Why? Isn't it enough to have once believed the gospel? Can we not go about our lives now and not be bothered by religion?

Those who ask these questions are the same people who ask questions like "who was Cain's wife". These are questions by people who attempt to subvert the truth rather than understand the truth.

More earnest heed. Notice we are not just commanded to hold the truth we heard. We are told to "give the more earnest heed". In other words, we should meditate more and more on the gospel. Not less. Not the same. We can't just hold the line but we must make progress. Spiritual progress must have a forward momentum. Remember Jesus said anyone who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom. How do you become fit for the kingdom? It requires forward momentum toward the kingdom. You must remember the finished and completed work of Christ. You must constantly look forward to the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ and his kingdom. This is having a view of the kingdom. This is demonstrated through Hebrews and the New Testament.

Overcomers in the body of Christ have forward momentum. They stretch forward to take hold on that for which Christ took hold on them. **Philippians 3:12**, *"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."*

There is a reason God saved you. It is more than an escape from hell. It is to prepare you for something you can only get a glimpse of right now by faith. It is for the purpose of receiving an inheritance in God's kingdom so you may participate in an God's kingdom.

Who preaches about the judgment seat of Christ? Who preaches about the reward and inheritance of the Christian? Who preaches about God's kingdom coming? The Lord Jesus Christ did. The apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ preached on this constantly. Why don't we?

It is because we have our minds set on things below. We have failed to set our mind on things above. We are preoccupied with this transient life in the body. We are caught up in provision and protection and worshiping ourselves. There is no time left for thinking about God's kingdom or preparing our soul to receive the reward and inheritance God wants to give us.

Christ died for us. He was buried. He rose again the third day. He ascended to heaven. He sits at the right hand of God the Father and makes intercession for us. He will return to the earth and reign as King over the nations.

That is not the end. We are only get a glimpse of what is coming. There is something much bigger beyond even these things. We can only see right now as far as the New Jerusalem.

What comes after that? God will make a new heavens and a new earth. We don't know much about that yet but we will get there. One day at a time. One step of faith at a time.

Let's keep our eyes on Jesus. He is the author and finisher of our faith. Hold tightly to what we have heard and never let the truth slip away. Live in expectancy of the return of Jesus and his kingdom.

2:2-4

Notice the contrast between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament people received discipline or punishment when they sinned against God. If this was true in the Old Testament it is also true in the New Testament. Not only has God not changed his mind about sin but it is even worse when you know more about God and still sin. We sin against greater light of who God is, and therefore we have greater accountability. We should look at these verses and let it sink in so that we will fear and respect the Lord.

The gospel was verified by the Lord and those who were with him. We have their testimony of the truth. Their testimony was confirmed by signs, wonders, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. God made sure those who trusted in his son Jesus had everything they needed to believe the gospel.

We have no less evidence today even if we have never seen a miracle. If we will open our heart we have seen the hand of God at work in our lives. I know I have. I have received God's mercy and grace in my life many times.

It is amazing that human nature is so stubborn and rebellious to continue in sin. May God have mercy on us.

I pray for my own soul that God would have mercy on me and save me from my own deceived heart. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. We need to turn away from ourselves and turn to God with all our heart and mind.

I am thankful today that Jesus died on the cross in my place. I deserve God's wrath for all of my sins but Jesus took my place. He died in my place. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. He will return and establish his kingdom over the nations. May his kingdom come, may his will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

2:5

It would be easy to skim over this verse and not feel the full punch of what this reveals. Let's start at the end of the verse: "whereof we speak". In these three words the apostle revealed part of his purpose in writing this letter of Hebrews. The apostle pointed toward a "world to come".

The Bible is preoccupied with the world to come. It doesn't focus the believer on living for the world system as it exists. Over and over we are reminded that the believer living today is only a stranger and a pilgrim. We are sojourners in this present world. Our true home is in the world to come. There is another world coming after the completion of this one. God is preparing people for the world to come. If we are willing to listen and receive what God is saying then we will also become preoccupied with the world that is coming. Listen to the false preachers of the apostasy today and they will try to get you living your best life now. This is self-worship. Our real life has not begun yet. We are not living for this present world. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul? The implication is that the more of this world system you have the more of your soul you lose.

The world to come does not belong to angels. They will not be ruling over the world that is coming. Now, why do you think the apostle felt that was important? Men are easily deceived by the supernatural, and there are fallen angels active on this planet which entice men into false worship and false religion. We need to avoid any religion, doctrine, or teaching which has its roots in angels.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the alpha and the omega. He is the beginning and the end. Angels are his servants. Angels are sent to serve those who will inherit salvation at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. We should respect angels in the sense that they are powerful and work for God, but we should not stoop to worshiping angels or replacing our faith in God with faith in angels. It is a sure sign a person is influenced by demons when they are obsessed with angels.

2:6-8

The Lord Jesus is the second Adam. He is the representative for man and because he overcame we who believe in him have overcome. Why do we overcome? So we can receive inheritance. We become heirs and joint heirs with the Lord Jesus in his kingdom. What makes us worthy of this honor? There is nothing we can do to overcome in our will power, determination, or self effort. We simply believe the gospel. Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. We put our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Because he overcame we overcome in him. How do we get to this position of being in Christ? God the Father placed us in his Son when we believed the gospel. This is the work of God from beginning to end. He is the author and finisher of our faith. If there were any room for our self in this process we might find a reason to boast, or worse yet, we may find a reason to drown in self-pity at the long list of our sins. But it does not depend on us.

We believe in God the Son. We accept his word as the truth. When we agree with the truth that is in Jesus we are changed by the Holy Spirit. We are changed into his image one day at a time. We reflect him and the devil hates us for it. He wants to destroy the image of God in us. This explains why the further we travel toward the end the more unnatural and perverse mankind becomes. The heaven is making a sour batch for the end.

The apostle addressed the relationship of angels and the Lord Jesus. Jesus reigns over the angels, and yet in his humanity he needed the help of angels. The Bible records how angels helped him in his forty days wilderness trial. The Bible records how angels helped the Lord Jesus when he suffered in the garden of Gethsemane. Angels were actively part of the story which unfolded in the Bible. However, remember: there is a real danger in men worshiping angels and so sinning against God. Read **Revelation 22:8-9**.

2:9

In his humanity the Lord Jesus depended on the help of angels. Angels helped the Lord Jesus at the end of his forty days of temptation in the wilderness. Angels helped Jesus during his suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus was a man so he could represent man in his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection. Christ died for our sins at Calvary. He suffered death in our place so that we would not suffer separation from God in death. Physical death is bad enough. But spiritual death and separation from God in eternity is far worse than physical death. When Jesus died at Calvary he took our place so that if we put our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior then we are saved. Christ died in our place.

Jesus suffered for us through his crucifixion and death. He was buried. On the third day he rose from the dead. He is now crowned with glory and honor. By the grace of God he tasted death for every man. Those who believe and receive Jesus Christ will benefit from what he accomplished. Those who reject the gospel and attempt to establish their own righteousness will suffer for their sins. The end of sin is always death. People do not understand that physical death is the beginning of death. Man is spirit, soul, and body. Death in the body is not the end of the soul. But spiritual death means complete and eternal separation from the giver of life. Eternal life is in God. Eternal death is separation from the Creator.

We cannot imagine the implications of this. I have listened to testimonies of people who claim to have had near death experiences. They had a experience of hell. If even a little of what they say is true I would not wish hell on my worst enemy. The Bible is clear that hell is a place of torment and never ends and there is no escape.

May the Lord help us warn, exhort, and help people to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ so that as many people as possible can escape hell.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day according to the scriptures. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. The Lord will not turn away anyone who comes to him in faith and calls on his name.

Hebrews 9:27, "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*"

2:10-12

All things were made for Jesus. God made all things for his Son Jesus Christ. All things are by him. By whom are all things. Everything that is made is from the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus is bringing many sons to glory. He is the captain of our salvation. He was made perfect through sufferings. What does that mean? It means suffering is a normal and necessary part of the Christian life. Suffering serves a purpose. One picture I keep in mind is that of a blacksmith. In order to make a tool one must melt some steel, hammer the steel, and heat up the steel. Use that picture to understand suffering. Suffering conforms us to the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus is the one who sanctifies us. Sanctification is the process of our soul being saved in the present tense. In the past tense we were justified by the finished, completed work of Christ (a work that

secures eternal security for our spirit). In the present tense we are saved in our mind, will, and emotions (our soul). In the future our bodies will also be saved when we are resurrected and receive a new body. This is what is meant by "bringing many sons to glory". It is all based on a work done by Jesus. It is worked out in time through what Christ did, what he is doing, and what he will do in the future. God sees it all from beginning to end. We can only perceive the past through the memory, the present through physical sense, and the future by faith.

Jesus called us his brothers. We are one with the Lord. He is not ashamed to call us brothers, because we were placed in Christ Jesus and united with him by God the Father. God did this. We are recipients of what God did. We get the privilege of participating in what God is doing and will do.

Lift your voice and sing praise to God for the gospel. Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. God is three in and one. Prophet, priest, and king. Israel, church, and the nations. Three days and all will be complete in the New Jerusalem.

2:13-17

In order for Jesus to be a substitute for the sins of man he became a man. In order to completely identify with man he became a man. Jesus was one hundred percent a man. He is also one hundred percent God. We cannot wrap our mind around this but we believe by faith.

The devil had the power of death. Men are in bondage to a fear of death. From my experience I believe this fear is behind most of the reasons why people behave the way they do. They are afraid of losing their lives. This is what motives self justification. This is what motivates grasping after position, power, and prestige. Men believe the more position they have the more they will be provided for and protected. But those who know God know He is our provider and our protector. An earthly position of power and prestige does not give us true provision and protection. Those who think this way are short sighted. They are short sighted because they cannot bear to think of themselves lying dead in a coffin. The fear of death forces men to conform to the world system.

For the overcoming Christian life in the world is much different. Why does the overcoming Christian participate in the world at all? Why doesn't he go off the grid or become a hermit? Because God has a purpose for us being in the world but not of the world. Our purpose is to be salt and light. We are ambassadors for Christ.

The devil has power over those who are afraid of death. But those who believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus are no longer afraid of losing their lives. They lost their life in Christ Jesus and were raised together with him. They are no longer trying to save their life or hold onto their life. They already died in Christ. Now they live for Jesus. Their life is tied in with God himself who is eternal life. Those who are in Christ Jesus will live forever. There is no fear of death for the believer.

Jesus fully identified with us in order to teach us not to be afraid of the end of the physical body. He rose from the dead to prove the devil is not in control. God Almighty is in control. We will live forever if we believe the gospel and put our trust in Jesus.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. Everyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved.

2:18

The Lord Jesus suffered. Whatever happened in the life of Christ can and does happen in the life of the Christian. Jesus said he was the master and that the servant would be the same as the master, though not necessarily to the depth or intensity of the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus fully identified with us by becoming a man. As a Christian our goal is to fully identify with the Lord Jesus. Our goal is to become in increasing measure one with him.

This is why receiving forgiveness is only the beginning. Complete salvation and deliverance from self, sin, the world, and the devil is our goal.

Our goal should be the same as the goal of God the Father. What is God's goal for us? Romans 8:29, *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

We are being conformed to the image of the Son. The goal of this process is so that the Lord Jesus can be the firstborn among many brothers.

Suffering is a normal part of the Christian life. It is part of the material in conforming us into the image of the Son.

The Lord Jesus suffered.

One benefit of the Lord's sufferings is that he is able to help us when we suffer. When we consider what Christ endured it changes the way we interpret our sufferings.

Our suffering is no longer pointless or random. It has purpose. It has value. It is accomplishing something in our lives.

What is it accomplishing? It is conforming us to the image of the Son.

Paul saw another aspect of this process. Let us quote Paul's word on suffering: **2 Corinthians 4:17**, *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."*

Affliction. Suffering. Persecution. Rejection. Being cast out. All of this works in favor of the Christian whose eyes are fixed on his Master. It works to our advantage to help us become one with our Lord and Savior. And that is the goal. That is the purpose. That we may be one with Jesus and one with the Father through him.

Hebrews Chapter 3

3:1-4

Those who believe the gospel of Jesus become participants in "the heavenly calling". Our calling is not an earthly calling. I've heard preachers today talk about having your best life right now. They talk about

prospering in this current world system. However, this is not our calling. Our true calling is the heavenly calling which points beyond this temporary existence right now to eternal life in God's kingdom.

We are exhorted to consider Christ Jesus. Think about the Lord Jesus as the Apostle and High Priest. This is keeping with the theme of Hebrews, because the point was that Christ fulfilled all of what the religious systems in the Old Testament pointed to. The Lord Jesus fulfilled the office of the priesthood. He is our High Priest. He is, therefore, superior to anything represented in the Old Testament. Reading the Old Testament should only be read with the mindset of understanding the Lord Jesus Christ. It should not be read with the mindset of instituting a religious system with another priesthood or high priest. This is where the catholic cult went off the rails and became just another cult. There should be no place in the true church for people who title themselves as priests or popes. Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a priest offering spiritual sacrifices to God by our faith in the completed work of Christ.

The Lord Jesus was faithful. A comparison is made between the Lord Jesus and Moses who was also faithful. Why is this comparison made? To show us, again, the superiority of the Lord Jesus over the Old Testament religious system and Moses. Even though Moses was faithful he could not hold a candle to the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses was faithful like a servant in a household. The Lord Jesus is faithful as the one who owns the house in which Moses was only a servant.

This showed that the Lord Jesus Christ is God. We see that he who built the house is the Lord Jesus and that "he that built all things is God". Jesus Christ is God. God the Father is God. The Holy Spirit is God. God is three in one. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is prophet, priest, and king. He reveals himself through Israel, the church, and the nations. In three separate seasons he reveals himself. At the conclusion of the third season all will be complete in the New Jerusalem.

3:5-6

Moses was a servant in the house of God. He was a faithful servant. But when compared to the Lord Jesus we find Moses was a servant but Christ is the son over his own house. Christ built the house. He is the owner of the house. He is the son over the house. Moses was a servant in the house.

This shows a sharp contrast between the religious system under Moses which truly did point to Christ and then the fulfillment of that shadow in Christ himself.

The overall purpose of Hebrews was the contrast between the old and the new. The old was a shadow. The new is the reality. The Lord Jesus is the reality of everything the Old Testament pointed to.

Why did the apostle make this point over and over? Because people were tempted to go back to their old religious life. The religious life provided community which also gave provision and protection. At the heart of dead religious life is self worship and not the worship of the living God. Christ is the living God; not a dead religious system.

Hebrews applies to us today. We are surrounded by dead religious churches. These dead churches are more dangerous than outright paganism or heathenism. At least with paganism it is out in the open.

But dead churches who claim to be Christian are more dangerous to the spiritual life of the Christian. It took a word from God and a revelation from God to enable me to evade the trap of dead churches. Only those called out of the called out ones escape the trap of dead religion which culminates in a one world religion of anti-Christ.

How is this possible? Dead religion is the religion of anti-Christ. It is the religion of self exaltation. Dead churches and denominations magnify the names of men which is self worship.

Where there is a true church men do not bicker over doctrines and traditions of men. They worship God in spirit and in truth. Men do not lead the church. They follow and obey the Holy Spirit.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Believe in your heart and confess with your mouth, "Jesus Christ is Lord", and you are saved.

3:7-11

Hearing the voice of God is underlined. It should be normal for a Christian to hear the voice of God. We have the Bible before us. We have the Holy Spirit who speaks to us through the scripture and our conscience. Is there other ways he speaks to us? The Lord has many ways of communicating to us. Paul prayed that those who received his letters would have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Where does revelation come from? The Holy Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus Christ to us. How can we understand unless we can hear?

Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. It is not enough to have heard but we must receive. We hear the gospel. We must receive the gospel. When God speaks we listen. We must receive the word he speaks to us. We need to remember what he said. We need to hold fast to what he said to us. God spoke to Abraham. He heard. He received. He believed. He remembered. He held God's word.

Israel heard but they did not believe or receive. God's word did not profit them. It is only when we hear, receive, and believe that we can profit from what God said and what he did for us.

If we do not believe what God says then we cannot enter his house. God's house is a place of rest. It is a place of fellowship, communion, and rest. Picture in your mind a warm fireplace and comfortable chairs. It is a place of rest. It is a place we enter by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. We hear the gospel, believe the gospel, and receive the gospel.

If we do not believe then we are left outside, separated from God, and like most men, waiting on God's wrath to catch up.

God speaks to us. We must listen to what God says. When he speaks listen to him and take it to heart. Remember the word God says to you. Hold fast to his promise to you. Do not let it go. The greatest word God ever spoke was his son Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Word of God. He is God's word to us. He is the promise of the Father. Cling to this word. Hold fast to the Lord Jesus Christ. Enter into the Lord and rest in this house with the Lord. He is our rest and he is our peace.

3:12-13

Notice who this verse is addressed to: brethren. The apostle spoke directly to brothers who were in the church. He said to take heed. Listen. What was the warning, what was the exhortation? The warning was to take heed lest there be an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. How is this possible? How is it possible that "a brother" can have an evil heart of unbelief?

When Israel heard God's word what did they do? They did not believe. They turned away and died in the wilderness and did not enter the promised land.

When Jesus appeared and spoke the word what happened? Many people turned away from him and complained he spoke "hard sayings". Who could listen to the hard things he said?

Those who could listen are those who chose to believe what he said.

A brother who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus is eternally secure in his spirit. His spirit is saved.

But he can depart from the Lord in his mind, will, and emotions. His mind can be taken over by the world system. He can give his mind, his will and his emotions to pursuing money, a name for himself, and the things of this world. It is possible for a man to call on Jesus and live just like everyone else in the world. He can be a religious, worldly man.

This is why we have this warning. Don't have an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

Focus on those words: living God. There are people who claim and profess to be a Christian but they do not know the living God. Their God is a God of rituals, and doctrines, and boring, dead routines which they go through every week. They know the songs, they know the routines, they have all that down. But there is no living God in their heart. As far as they are concerned God created everything and set it in motion but has now disappeared. He is on vacation. He is sitting on his throne somewhere preoccupied with something else.

I've heard people describe God in that manner. They do not know the living God. They have no fear of God before their eyes. God is not active in their life. They go to church but they live like the world. They do not have faith in the living God. They have an evil heart of unbelief.

What is the cure for this? We are to exhort one another. Keep on exhorting until it is clear the brother is no longer listening to you. How can you tell when someone is not listening? Because they do the opposite of what you tell them. They do not listen. They do not believe you are speaking from God. They think you are just another man with just another opinion. In other words they think you are just like them: someone who is out to make a name for yourself so you can provide for self, protect self, and worship self.

That man has an evil heart of unbelief. He does not serve the living God. He is serving a God of his own imagination. Do not believe their emotional pleas. Do not believe their tears. Do not believe the words that come out of their mouth. Read **Proverbs 14:7**.

3:14-19

Continue believing in the living God. There are some who believe and receive the security of their spirit. Christ died for their sins. They are justified by what Christ did on Calvary. They called on the name of the Lord Jesus at some point in their lives. However, they did not continue to believe to the saving of their souls. What does this mean? It means they gave their mind, will, and emotions over to serving the world system and their own self.

They believed in Jesus but they never became a disciple of Jesus. What happens to a person like this? Do they lose their spirit's salvation? I do not think it is possible to undo what Christ did at Calvary through his death, burial, and resurrection.

But I do think it is possible that a man can cheat himself out on what God offers in the kingdom. In the same way that Israel was saved out of Egypt but never entered the promised land a man can be saved in his spirit but his soul never transformed into the image of Christ.

Only those who become one with Christ and only those who partake of Christ himself will receive inheritance in God's kingdom. What happens to those spirits who were justified but never sanctified? What happens to those spirits who were justified but never had their soul sanctified?

I don't know the answer. I do know this. We need to work out our salvation (of the soul) with fear and trembling. We should not take for granted that going through religious routines is sufficient. We all know in our conscience that it is not enough. We need to press on to take hold on all that Christ took hold of us for. We know this.

The gospel of grace brings us the good news that our sins are washed away. However, many people do not press on to discover that God's grace also delivers us from self, from sin, the world, and the devil.

Let us press on. Let us not allow ourselves to have an evil heart of unbelief and depart from the living God.

There is only one way forward. It is by an active and aggressive faith in the finished and completed work of Christ. We must abide in the gospel.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. God the Father placed us into Christ and united us together with him. We are now dead to sin and alive to God. Walk in this truth. Live in this truth. Do not let sin be your master, but let the Lord Jesus Christ be your master from now on.

Hebrews Chapter 4

4:1

We are exhorted to fear. Why would we be encouraged to fear? Fear is not always a bad thing. It is good to fear a bear in the woods. It is good to fear a lion on the plain. It is good to fear a bandit in the night. Fear is a good thing if it helps us focus on a priority.

What is the priority in this verse? Entering God's rest. The fear we should have, therefore, is to fail to enter God's rest. Our fear should not be of losing our salvation. Our fear should be in failing to enter God's rest.

This is different from salvation in the sense of justification. There is nothing we can add or take away from the salvation of our spirit. We are secure by trusting in the finished and completed work of Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. The gospel message is that our sins are forgiven and washed away in the blood of the Lamb.

This is not talking about the salvation of the spirit. We do not need to fear losing out with God because God is the one who secured the salvation of our spirit.

So, what is this? Why should we be afraid of not entering into this rest?

Rest is what happens after we accomplish something. What is the work we are to accomplish? God finished his work and rested. What is our work then?

Our work is to believe the gospel and to continue believing the gospel until it separates us from self, sin, the world, and the devil. We are to continue to press into the truth of the gospel. We are to hold fast God's word. In a few more verses we will get into the separation of the spirit and soul by the word of God.

It is only when we see this we understand the difference between the salvation of the spirit and the salvation of the soul.

The soul is the mind, will, and emotions. We can be born again by God's spirit in our spirit and receive eternal life. This does not guarantee, however, that our mind, will, and emotions are in agreement with God's word.

This is the work, then. It is agreeing with God's word. It is agreeing with the truth. Our work is to believe in God's son, the Word of God, the embodiment of truth. When we know the truth, and continue in the truth, the truth sets us free from self, sin, the world, and the devil.

This has been called sanctification. It is the work of believing God's word so aggressively we become peculiar to the backslid, lukewarm church folk around us. We stand in stark contrast to those whose minds are controlled by the spirit of the world system.

What is God's promise? It is rest. When does this rest come? After the day of work? What is our work? To believe the gospel. To trust in the finished, completed work of Jesus Christ.

This work separates us. It divides asunder spirit and soul, bones and joints. It digs deep into us, showing us what is holy and common. It shows us how to walk in agreement with the Lord. It shows us how to walk in the spirit and not in the flesh. Walking in the spirit is walking in agreement with the truth. Walking in the flesh is to have our minds in agreement with the world system.

The gospel is simple. It will take your whole life on this earth to believe everything the gospel provides for you. It is eternal.

Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. This is the pattern. This is the way to God. There is no other way to God except through the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

4:2-4

Let me start by focusing on the phrase "as well as unto them". We heard the gospel. Who else heard the gospel? "As well as unto them". This is pointing back to Israel. They heard the gospel! The gospel was preached to us and also to them. I've heard preachers say the gospel only applies to New Testament believers, but that is not what I see happening in this verse. The gospel was preached as well unto them.

But the gospel did not profit them. Why didn't the gospel profit them? Because they did not believe when they heard. But they were already saved. They had been saved out of Egypt. They were saved. They were on their way to the promised land.

But they no longer believed the word Moses told them. It got too hard for them to keep on believing. The wilderness was hot and even though God sent them food and water it was too hard. Their faith did not continue.

This reminds me of the parable Jesus told about the different kinds of soil where seed was planted. The seed is God's word. It is the gospel. But in some folks the word does not profit them. They do not bear fruit. They do not continue to abide in the vine. Why? They stop believing. They get distracted. Their life gets too hard. They look for some other way to solve their problems and find happiness.

If a man does not continue in the word he will not finish well. It is not as important how you start. It is how you finish the race that matters. You started out believing God's word. Are you now turning to some other method? Are you trusting in religious rituals? Are you trusting in yourself? Are you putting your faith in faith as an end in itself?

They did not keep the word in their heart because they stopped believing. Therefore, they could not find rest. They kept walking in the wilderness in unbelief and disobedience. There was no haven of rest for them. There was no end to their works.

God finished his work and then he rested. Our work is to believe the gospel and continue until we enter God's rest completely.

The pattern is to believe the gospel. This is our spiritual work. We hold on and abide in God's word. We do not accept unbelief, or the attitude of the world. We hold to the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not let go of him. Then when the time comes we enter into him and receive our reward. Our inheritance.

Those who abide in unbelief lose their reward. They may be born again but their soul was not transformed into the image of Jesus so they are of no use in the kingdom. They don't receive an inheritance.

The Bible says we should fear that we do not enter God's rest. If the bible says to fear something we better think hard about it. What is there to fear? Why is God telling us to fear something? It is not hell in the context. It is not losing our eternal salvation in the context.

What are we supposed to fear? You should fear that having heard God's word you stop believing and your soul turns back to living like the rest of the world in pride, and the lust of the eyes, and the lust of the flesh. You should fear that your soul will not be walking in agreement with the truth when you leave your body.

The fear of the Lord is clean. It helps to focus on what is important. What are you focused on today? Read **Revelation 3:3,11**.

4:5-10

The Lord wants us to enter his rest. God's rest is an experience of trusting in the gospel to the point where you no longer rely on your own ability, strength, or righteousness. You see clearly there is nothing you can do to commend yourself to God and so instead trust completely in the completed work of the Lord Jesus to justify, sanctify, and to one day grant you a glorified body.

The word "today" still applies to us, and God still speaks to us and wants us to find rest in him. There is no rest outside of the Lord Jesus. There is nothing this world can offer that will truly bring rest to the soul. Only in Christ can we find the peace which passes all understanding.

A man who enters God's rest no longer tries to establish his own righteousness through good works. True enough that good works flow from a heart grateful for God's mercy but a truly saved man knows his good works do not save or justify him before God.

Good works are important. But God's grace comes first. A man is saved by faith in Jesus. He rests in the finished and completed work of Christ. When he is seated and at rest then he will produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Any other lifestyle will only bear the poisoned fruit of Cain and the world system. We cannot enter by our good works. We only enter rest by trusting in the work Christ accomplished at Calvary.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day, according to the scriptures. Call on the name of Jesus. Allow God to wash away your sins in the blood of the Lamb.

4:11

Here is an interesting verse of scripture. We are supposed to labor so we can enter "that" rest. How do we labor to enter this rest? The rest of the verse gives us a clue. You fail at entering rest by failing to believe.

Jesus was once asked the question, "*What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?*" (**John 6:28**) Notice and think about the answer Jesus gave (verse 29), "*Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*"

The work of every believer is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the one work we are called to. If we will do this one work we will enter God's rest. The Lord Jesus Christ is God's rest. Everything in all creation and in all Israel and in all history and the future is summed up in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our rest is the Lord Jesus Christ. The seventh day, or Sabbath, was a symbol pointing us to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. People who enjoy religion get caught up in focusing on the seventh day but the seventh day of rest is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus fulfilled it all.

Our only work is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. What happens in our life as a result of believing in Jesus? **John 7:38**, *"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."*

This living water is also known as the fruit of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in and through the man who works at believing the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit does all the other work that needs to be done through the life of the one who works at believing the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is all I have to do. This is the one great work of my life. To abide in Christ. To enter this promised rest. To enter into and abide in him and to live in him and to walk in him.

Jesus tried to teach people this over and over in different ways. He said to eat his flesh and drink his blood. He said that he is the vine and we are the branches. It is the same lesson. Christ is all and all. All we need is Jesus. He is everything to us. Outside of him we have nothing but our own dark soul which is an endless abyss of darkness.

Let the Lord Jesus fill you completely with his Spirit. Open your heart and believe the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Enter this rest for your soul.

Matthew 11:28-30, *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

4:12

This is an important bible verse. It is one of the bible verses which really stood out to me when I first started reading the Bible, even though I did not know why at the time. It gives us a glimpse into how God's word changes those who put their faith in Jesus. God's word is alive. It is powerful. It is sharper than a two edged sword. It pierces us to the very soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and discerns our thoughts and intentions. What does this mean?

The word of God shows us the difference between our thoughts and the thoughts of God. What God says is true. Most of what we think and say is just our vain imagination. The word of God is alive. Jesus Christ is alive, and he is God's word. When we accept Jesus we are agreeing with the word of God. We are agreeing with the truth. Many times we will find that agreeing with the truth will condemn us. We must take the side of Jesus even against ourselves. This is what Jesus said when he said we must love him more than we love our own family or love our own self. Our love for Jesus will seem like hatred to our unsaved family or worldly friends. They cannot comprehend what motivates us. It is because we agreed with the truth and the truth in Jesus changed our minds about who we are, who they are, and what the world is all about.

We no longer worship self like our family. We no longer live for self. We cling to and agree with and live for the word of God. As a result, there is a separation which takes place between the soul of man

and his spirit. The spirit agrees with the truth. Over time the mind, will, and emotions are brought on side with the spirit as we stay in God's word. The Christian who does not abide in God's word will turn to the world system in their soul, and their soul and spirit never are divided from one another. They are Christians who live completely for the flesh, and they are ruled by their worldly minds. The mind of the unbeliever can never accept God's word. But the man who calls on the name of Jesus must continue to call on him and agree with the word of God. Without God's word continually working in our spirit and soul we will conform to the world instead of conforming to the image of Jesus Christ.

God's word not only affects us spiritually, but it also affects us in every way, even in our physical bodies. One day God will raise up these bodies and the new creation will be a resurrected body like the Lord Jesus Christ. In God's creation a man is spirit, soul, and body. All are important to God. All will continue through eternity. We will have a body, soul, and spirit. We are made in the image of God.

Many times I have thought one way and the word of God showed me I was wrong even though what I thought might have been a good thought. God's word goes deeper than what is right and wrong. It shows us the difference between what is life giving and what brings death. Many things in churches which people think are good are actually spreading spiritual death. Only someone who continues to agree with God's word can tell the difference. Those who hear God's word and turn away can no longer see the difference between religion (spiritual death) and a relationship with Jesus (spiritual life). The picture of the two trees in the Garden of Eden give us our earliest glimpse of this truth.

Let us continue in God's word and not turn aside. We must carry on and continue in God's word until we are fully conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4:13

The phrase in this verse "with whom we have to do" points to the truth of our personal accountability to God who made us. God made us. Therefore we belong to him. Therefore we will give an account to him who made us and who owns us. When we paint a picture we put our signature on it and it belongs to us. We belong to God because he made us. Not only did he make us but he also bought us back from sin by dying in our place at Calvary. Therefore God owns us twice over. We will give an account of our lives. There is no changing the fact that we will stand before God and give an account of our lives.

This is not a judge who relies on second hand testimony or evidence. This is a judge who saw and heard everything we did and everything we said. Nothing is hidden from the eyes of the one to whom we will give an account. God sees it all. He knows it all. Everything in life is visible and open before the eyes of God Almighty to whom we belong and to whom we will give an account.

The eyes of the Lord are on every man. There is no man hidden from his sight. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and the wicked. Every man will stand before God and give an account of his life.

Here are some scriptures about God's judgment of men: **1 Peter 4:5, Romans 14:12, Matthew 12:36, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 20:11-15.**

A question you should ask is how to get your name written in the book of life. How can you be saved from the lake of fire? Believe the gospel! Read **Acts 16:30-31**. The gospel is simple. Read **1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Romans 10:9-10,13**. You are saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the work

he accomplished at Calvary through his death, burial, and resurrection. You are saved by faith and through God's grace toward you. Read **Ephesians 2:8-9**. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust in him as your Lord and Savior. Call on the name of the Lord. Continue to trust in the good news that your sins are forgiven, that you have been saved from yourself, from sin, from this world system, and from the devil. Continue in Christ Jesus and the gospel and grow in God's grace and in your knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4:14-16

You never know what a day may bring forth. You never know when your time of need will come. It springs out of the shadows like a mugger, ready to pounce, ready to beat you down with a baseball bat. I've felt it. I know what it is like to be blind sided, bushwhacked, beat down by people you thought were your friends but threw you under the bus in a moment. I know. It is human nature. The hearts of men are deceitful and full of wickedness. Cain rose up against Abel and slew him. This is the story of the human race.

There was another man who did not rise up against his brother but instead gave his life. Jesus came into this world and became our great high priest. He is now passed into the heavens, but is actively involved in what happens to us. Because I know this, I do not give in to depression, despair, or despondency. I do not give in to self-pity, or hatred towards those who do me wrong. Instead, I turn the other cheek. I forgive those who have so spitefully used me and abused me, slandered me, and wiped their feet me. I forgive them. They do not know what they have done. I commit them to God and I trust that the Lord will do what is right.

Jesus is my defender, protector, and provider. The Lord will defend me against those who make themselves my enemy. He will take care of those who cursed me. I pray God will have mercy on them because I know how angry God becomes against those who persecute his people. I know because I can read the Bible. God curses those who curse his people. He blesses those who bless his people. I know what will happen to those who did me wrong. They will not prosper. The hole they have dug? They will fall into it. The stone that have rolled? It will roll back on them. The seed they have sown? They will reap it. May God have mercy on their souls and open their eyes to what they did so that they can humble themselves, and repent, and find mercy from their Creator.

Jesus went through this. Everything that happened to me Jesus went through it. He knows the pain, heart break, tears, the shock of betrayal. He is touched with the feeling of everything I have experienced. He will never leave me. He will never forsake me.

Therefore I go boldly to the throne of God's grace to find grace and mercy in my time of need. Today I am in need. I know that God hears the cry of my heart, and he sees what Satan did to me. He sees it. He sees every person Satan used and those who participated. He sees it all. I commit my life into God's hand. Into thine hands, Father, I commit my spirit. Have thine own way, Lord. Have thine own way. In Jesus name.

Hebrews Chapter 5

5:1-5

Jesus was given the position of high priest by God the Father. In God's kingdom men do not receive positions because they earn it but because God chooses whom he will give positions. God gave the Lord Jesus, his Son, the position and responsibility of being the great high priest.

The high priest in Israel was taken from among men. He had a job to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. But the Lord Jesus offered himself, once and for all, to purge our sins and to satisfy the justice of God forever.

Priests were people who should have compassion. They were just as weak and sinful as the people they offered sacrifices for. They should not think they were better than the people they served God on behalf of. Unfortunately, those infected with the world's spirit of pride will always think they are lords over God's heritage.

Men do not call themselves to ministry. Only God can truly call a man to serve him. There are many people who say they serve God but only God knows those who are his.

The Lord Jesus did not glorify himself but glorified the heavenly Father. We should not glorify ourselves or praise ourselves. That is the way of the world. People who do not know God worship themselves. They are self worshipers. They are fixed on their own provision, protection, and self worship. They are controlled by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. They do not know that God is our provider, our protector, and our portion. All they know is what they can see which is passing away. This world is passing away.

God said to his Son: *"Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee."*

God has a son. His name is Jesus. He is our high priest. He is living right now, making intercession for us as our great high priest. There is only one mediator between God and man, and that is the man Christ Jesus.

5:6-7

We do not need any more priests to help us to know God or be right with God. There is only one priest for us now. This priest is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is our great high priest.

What is the order of Melchisedec? I've seen people get caught up on these scriptures about Melchisedec, but the point here was that the Lord Jesus was similar to Melchisedec. This Old Testament priest, who showed up before Moses, did not have a beginning or end. He was a great man because Abraham paid tithes to him and he blessed Abraham. So, in a way, this man was greater than Abraham. Who could this man be? The scripture does not come right out and say this was Christ himself in pre-incarnate form.

Instead, the point was that Melchisedec provided a Bible example of the Lord Jesus. He was a type of the Lord Jesus. He foreshadowed and pointed to the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is interesting that this scripture is in the book of Psalms, before the Lord Jesus was born. This is a prophecy in the book of Psalms about the Lord Jesus Christ.

The next part described how the Lord Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. We see this in the account of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. God heard the prayers of the Lord Jesus. It says God heard him because Jesus "feared". I believe this means he had reverence for the heavenly Father. This is how we should be when we cry out to God. We should have reverence toward God. The word fear is not a tormenting fear where a person cringes. Instead, it points to an attitude of humble submission and worship toward God our creator.

The Lord Jesus set the example in how to pray. We should cry out to God. We should not be afraid to cry tears and call on the name of our heavenly Father.

5:8-10

Jesus learned through what he suffered as a man. Even though he was the Son of God he still went through a learning process as a man. In every way the Lord Jesus identified with man. He suffered like a man. He learned through his suffering. One idea which can help us is to realize that God can use human suffering to teach us. No one likes to suffer but there is good that can result from suffering if we have faith and trust in God.

The Bible shows us clearly that suffering is a normal part of the Christian life. In almost every book in the New Testament we read the account of Christians suffering for their faith. We can also read the doctrine of suffering through Paul's letter, and Peter's letters. Peter spent a lot of time in his letter addressing the subject of suffering. Read **1 Peter 2:19-21**. These verses make it clear that suffering is a normal part of the Christian life. Anyone who preaches that if Christians have faith they would not suffer have not truly studied the Bible in context. If we would read the New Testament in context we would find that Jesus predicted that Christians would suffer, that the apostles in the book of Acts suffered, and that in the apostolic letters we find the doctrine of suffering.

The church has a long history of suffering. This history can be read in "Foxes' Book of Martyrs". Also, more modern testimonies of faith under fire can be read in books such as "Tortured for Christ" by Richard Wurmbrand, "The Hiding Place" by Corrie ten Boom, and the testimony of Jim Elliot who died as a martyr and as a missionary to the Auca Indians in South America. These are a few I am aware of and can recall, but I am sure there are many Christians who could share a testimony of suffering.

I heard a preacher say that in the last hundred years there was more persecution and martyrs in the church than all the other centuries combined since Christ ascended to heaven. I do not know if this is true but I expect the closer we get toward the end the enemy will intensify his efforts to destroy the church.

We must be vigilant. Our adversary prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. We should expect that we shall face persecution, suffering, and situations where our endurance and patience will be further developed.

What is one purpose in all this? God wants his children to be conformed to the image of his son Jesus. If Jesus learned obedience through suffering then it goes without saying that we will suffer and learn obedience.

5:11-14

It is not always the preacher's fault if people do not grow in their relationship with the Lord. Here was an example of where the preacher wanted to go on and preach the deeper things of God but his congregation was not ready. They were dull of hearing. Over time, if we are not careful, we can lose interest in the things of God, even though we continue going through the routine of church and showing up every Sunday. But we quit listening. We quit receiving truth. We lose our love for truth and become preoccupied with the work week. We don't listen because our mind is full of worries, anxieties, and fears.

These Christians listened to the preacher so long they should have been able to teach others. Instead, they were still babes in Christ. The passing of time does not indicate spiritual growth. I've run across a few senior citizens who thought because they were elderly they were spiritual or smart. However, we know that without having a love of the truth and striving to put God's word into practice we do not grow. Our spiritual growth is not measured by time. People can put in four years at college and not learn anything. They put in time. I've seen this in the work place. I've seen people who spent a lifetime at a place and had little skill in their profession.

The analogy of meat and milk was used. A baby can only digest milk. But a grown man can eat steak. The message is to grow up so we are able to digest truth a new Christian cannot digest. We need to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the context of Hebrews the "milk" was man's religion. The apostle tried to get them out of religion and into a relationship with the Lord Jesus. This does not happen by a routine of religion. It comes by careful hearing, receiving, believing, and exercising yourself to obey truth. The longer we agree with the word of God the more insight we have and the stronger we become in grace and truth.

We should never stop growing spiritually. We need to stay in the word and prayer, not just Sunday, but every day. Not having enough time due to work or family is not an excuse. Set aside time to draw near to God, worship God, and listen to his voice and put into practice what he teaches us.

This is an exhortation to leave behind man-made religion, routines, rituals, and go on to live the true spiritual life of faith in the gospel, reliance on the Holy Spirit, and a constant spiritual gaze upward to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. Everyone who believes that God raised Jesus from the dead and confesses with their mouth that Jesus is Lord is saved. Call upon the name of the Lord Jesus today and be saved from sin, self, the world, and the devil. Jesus is returning again to this earth and he will establish his kingdom over all the nations. Every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Hebrews Chapter 6

6:1-3

What is milk? What is meat? Milk was basic doctrine such as repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection, and eternal judgment. This was the milk of basic Bible teaching. Anyone who was saved for a little while should know these doctrines. This is milk for new believers.

What is sad is that I know these doctrines are not even taught to new Christians in the modern church. It is rare to find a preacher who even teaches these basic bible doctrines. Instead, what fills pulpits today is new age teachings, doctrines of devils, psychology, self-help, and self-worship. Truly we are living in the last days when there is a great departure from basic Bible truth.

We should learn these basic principles and then move on to the meat of God's word. The meat in Hebrews is that Jesus Christ is exalted over all religion. God gave Israel their religion in the Old Testament, but this religion was supposed to point them to the reality of their Messiah. When their Messiah arrived they loved religion more than the Messiah and rejected him. But to those who did believe in Jesus he gave them the power to become the sons of God.

We learn more and more that the meat of God's word is the Messiah himself. Continue steadfastly to believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day.

The application of the gospel and depth of the gospel is lived out in a deeper way as we learn from the Holy Spirit how the gospel applies to our every day life. Paul began to dig into the application of the gospel in Romans and Ephesians. We find out the gospel went far beyond the forgiveness of sins and actually saves us from self, sin, the world system, the devil, and from death.

I have nothing against teaching basic bible doctrines. I wish more preachers would cover the basic doctrines of Christ. However, I also long as the apostle did to continue on to perfection.

What is perfection? The Lord Jesus Christ himself is perfection. We should press on to know him more and more.

No man can truly teach us about Christ. We only learn about the Lord Jesus in the school of the Holy Spirit. If we are willing to go on and learn of Christ the Holy Spirit will reveal him to us.

There is a price to be paid. The price for growing in the Lord is losing friends, family, religion, and sometimes your job. You may lose everything in your pursuit of knowing Christ Jesus. The Lord said this would happen to us and the apostles repeated this message. Read **2 Timothy 3:12, John 16:33**.

Are you willing to pay the price to know the Lord Jesus Christ? Or are you satisfied with church as usual? Press on to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.

6:4-6

I think it is easy for people to misunderstand these specific verses. On the surface it might appear these verses imply a man can lose his eternal salvation. However, I do not think salvation is in view here.

If we look at the context of Hebrews we see Hebrew Christians tempted to stop living as Christians and return to the synagogue. In other words, even though they were born again they wanted to return to the world system, (religion is included in the world system). As a result, they would no longer have a testimony of Christ and would be unable to produce spiritual fruit.

When a Christian stops agreeing with the gospel and instead bargains with religion he no longer actively partakes with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is contrary to the world system. The Holy Spirit is life but the world system (religion, included) is death.

Those who continue with the gospel continue to taste the goodness of God's promises and have their heart set on the kingdom. However, when a man turns to religion or the world his heart no longer is set on the kingdom. In other words, this man lives according to the principle of self-worship instead of worshipping the living God through Christ Jesus.

Did he lose his eternal salvation? I do not think so but he is one of those saved "as through the fire" and loses inheritance and reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

Repentance means we stop agreeing with the world system and worldly religion and instead agree with the gospel. When we stop agreeing with the gospel we put ourselves under the world system again.

It is impossible to live according to both principles. This is how Jesus put it: "*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*" (**Matthew 6:24**)

I don't think eternal salvation is in view in these verses. I think it is a statement of fact: a man cannot live for God and himself at the same time. He cannot worship God and worship himself at the same time. Worship of self includes self-provision, self-protection, and self-worship.

When a Christian agrees to live according the world system and worship self then his testimony becomes "Christ Jesus is not enough".

This is putting the Lord to open shame. Our testimony should always be that the Lord is our provider, our protector, and our portion.

This is difficult when a man is an outcast in society. Those outside the Hebrew society were outcast and did not have government, economic, or social support as the common Jew did. Being a Christian meant you were outside of the support systems. The Christian only had God to protect him, provide for him, and be his portion.

This same issue is before every Christian and not just the early Hebrew Christians.

Is our testimony "the Lord is my provider" or do we live in fear of man and what man can do to us?

I have suffered greatly at the hands of men who were filled with the spirit of Satan. I have suffered greatly but through my suffering I have learned obedience and my testimony remains: "*God is my provider, my protector, and my portion forever*".

David put it very well in **Psalm 23**. *The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall not want.*

Remember, if the devil cannot take away your salvation he will try to prevent you from having a testimony.

How does he do that? He tempts you in these three areas always: provision, protection and portion. These three areas fit in with the evil spirit of the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. (**1 John 2**).

Meditate on this and if you understand this you will avoid traps and snares Satan puts out there for Christians.

Do not make agreements which will cause you to sell your soul to the world for money or protection. Do not worship yourself and so be ensnared. Do not love yourself. Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, all of your soul, all of your mind. Worship God! Do not worship yourself.

Worship of self is the foundation of the kingdom of darkness. Avoid it by putting all of your trust and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

6:7-9

The examples point to bearing fruit. Plants or trees produce fruit. That is the analogy. The interpretation is that in the life of the Christian there should be evidence of spiritual life.

A Christian is spiritually alive so their life should testify of spiritual life. This analogy coincides with my previous comments that this section of scripture is not talking about eternal salvation but it is talking about a fruitful life which receives a reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

A Christian who bears spiritual fruit will be rewarded for his faithfulness. The only way a Christian can bear spiritual fruit, however, is to continue to walk in agreement with the truth of God's word. At whatever point the Christian fails to agree with the Lord he will not bear spiritual fruit.

He can even cause spiritual death if he aggressively promotes the principles of the world system, which is what is currently happening in American mega churches. All of the fruit which comes from agreement with the world system will be burned up, like thorns, briers, or dead branches.

Jesus taught us about this as well. Read **John 15:6**. Abiding in Christ is as simple as agreeing with what he says. If at any point you disagree with the Lord then you are no longer "abiding in Christ". Instead, you put yourself outside Christ and can no longer bear spiritual fruit. You bear the fruit of the world system which is spiritual death. Everything that is spiritual death will be cast into the fire. The destination of everything that is spiritual death is the lake of fire.

Is it possible to bear the fruit of spiritual death as a Christian? Is that not what this passage is saying right here in Hebrews?

Look at the verses. He is talking to Christians! He warns them not to be briars, thorns, and dead branches. Jesus says if you do not abide in him you become a dead branch. The end result of dead branches is fire.

I believe once a Christian is saved he is saved forever. With that being said I also believe the works "done in the flesh" (done in agreement with the world system principles) is burned in the fire of God's judgment. The Christian's soul or spirit is preserved through the fire but all his life's achievements and works are burned up. He wasted his life living for himself instead of living for God. He invested himself in his own provision, his own protection, and loving himself more than he loved God. Read 1 **Corinthians 3:13-15**.

Jesus warns about this over and over in his teachings. The spirit of a man who calls on the name of Jesus is eternally secure. But his rewards, his inheritance, and his place in God's kingdom is not secure. A believer should be very concerned about this. I cannot stress this enough. Do not go back to religion and turn your back on the living God. Do not make your agreement to live like the world system, which is at the root self-worship (pride and unbelief).

Here is another warning from the New Testament about losing your inheritance in God's kingdom. Remember, this is preached to Christians. Remember, a Christian does not lose his eternal soul. Salvation is eternal. However, what happens to the Christian who lives according to the world system? Read **Ephesians 5:3-7**.

You might say an idolater is not a Christian. However, if a Christian cannot be an idolater why was Paul teaching this to Christians? Yes, Christians can be idolaters. How? When you stop agreeing with the Lord. When you think you know better than the Bible, scripture, or the Lord. People do this ALL THE TIME. As a matter of fact, Christians barely read the Bible because they think they already know how to live for God as a Christian! This pride is a symptom of an idolater. People think they are smarter than the Bible. This lack of interest in reading and studying the Bible is not just apathy or a lack of time. It is pride and unbelief. Pride and unbelief are idolatry. You are worshiping yourself rather than worshiping God.

The unbeliever worships. He worships himself. How do I know that? Because he thinks he is smarter than the Bible and the God he claims not to believe in. He is an idolater. He worships his own intellect and mind. He is, in effect, worshiping himself.

But Christians do this as well. By ignoring the Bible, by disagreeing with what the Lord Jesus says, and by ignoring the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to their conscience. My guess is that the majority of people in churches live this way every day. They think following rituals, or showing up once a week in a building alongside their fellow idolaters makes it OK. It does not. They do not believe what they hear and they do obey the voice of the Lord their God. They prove by their actions that they do not believe what they profess.

God is merciful. When a man cries out to Jesus then God saves that man. But who can stand before the Lord Jesus at the judgment seat of Christ and receive an inheritance? I will tell you who will. Those

who overcome. The remnant who believe God's word and keep on believing God's word even if it costs them everything in their life. Even if they lose everything they still cling to their faith and will not turn their back on Jesus.

Continue in the word of God. Here are some exhortations from scripture to continue in the word, in the truth, in the faith. Please read **John 8:31, Acts 14:22, Romans 11:22, Colossians 1:23, 1 Timothy 4:16, 1 John 2:24, 1 John 2:28.**

6:10-12

Let's think about what is stated here. God is not unrighteous. He will always do what is right. He does not forget our work and labor of love which we have done in his name. He remembers our service for him. He knows what we have done. Always remember we are working for the Lord and not for man. We do not work to earn a paycheck but we work to please the Lord. Our work is always for the Lord. It is not for man. It is not for ourselves. It is for the Lord. And the Lord will repay us for all of our work. He will make sure we are fairly compensated for everything we do. We need to stay fruitful and productive. God will reward us and take care of our needs.

Colossians 3:23-24, *"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."*

We are serving the Lord. He will reward us. Work for the Lord. Let your work be done always serving the Lord. How will this affect your work ethic? I've found that when I keep in my mind that I am working for the Lord I always do a good job.

Other people criticize me but I know my conscience is clear because I did the best I could. I am getting older now. I am sick and in bad health. I did the best job I could. The Lord knows I did the best I could. The Lord will take care of me. He is my provider.

We should never be lazy in life. Instead, be diligent to do what God puts into our hand to do. The Lord will take care of us if we serve him. Our place of service to the Lord may change but we are serving only one employer. He is the Lord Jesus. No matter where I am in life I will serve the Lord.

6:13-15

God gave Abraham a promise. Abraham patiently endured until the promise was fulfilled. We see a similar pattern when God speaks to someone. The promise Abraham obtained was his son Isaac. Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob who became Israel. Through the nation of Israel God fulfilled his highest promise: the seed of the woman - the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's promise has a larger application. We see the beginning of God fulfilling his promise in Abraham's son. God promised the seed of the woman. This points forward to the seed of Abraham. The apostle Paul interpreted this for us. **Galatians 3:16**, *"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."*

The Lord Jesus fulfilled the seed promise given to Abraham. God fulfilled his promise to Abraham and there is more in the Kingdom when Jesus returns. We will see the fulfillment of God's promise to

Abraham concerning the land. All the land promised to Abraham will be given when Jesus sits on the throne in Jerusalem.

God blessed Abraham and multiplied his family. Abraham had Isaac. Isaac had Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons who multiplied and became the nation of Israel. As God said, Abraham's descendants are more than the stars and more than the grains of sand.

There is also a spiritual fulfillment in those who believe the Lord Jesus from every nation. All who believe in Jesus are spiritual descendants of Abraham.

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day.

6:16-20

Here we learn about God's character. It is impossible for God to lie. When God gives his word we have strong consolation. Those who take refuge in the Lord have hope which is an anchor for our soul. This hope is sure and steadfast. Our hope is the Lord Jesus Christ. **Romans 15:13.**

Many times we are afflicted with disaster. Tragedy strikes and we feel we cannot go forward. But God gives his word. He gives his promise. It is impossible for God to lie. We are comforted knowing the Lord provides, protects, and is our portion. The Lord will accomplish his plan for our lives. **Jeremiah 29:11.**

The Lord Jesus is our great high priest. He intercedes for us. He made us clean through his completed work at Calvary. Now he prays for us. He prays that when the enemy comes to sift us that our faith will be strong. He prays we will not be overwhelmed. Instead, we overcome. We overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony and we love not our lives even unto the death. **Revelation 12:11.**

Has God given you a promise? He gave a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He gave a promise to Joseph. He gave his promise to Joshua, and Moses, and Samuel, and David. He gave his promise to the prophets who knew his name and proclaimed his word. He gives his promise that his church will not fail. The gates of hell shall not prevail against his church.

If we believe in Jesus we are now in his church. If we believe God raised Jesus from the dead and confess that Jesus is Lord then we belong to him. He will complete the good work which he started in us. The Lord will not fail. He will finish what he started in our lives. **Philippians 1:6.**

The Lord prepares a place for us. He will receive us that where he is we may be also. Let us continue to look forward to all that the Lord has prepared for us. **John 14:3.**

Hebrews Chapter 7

7:1-3

The apostle circled back around to Melchisedec. Melchisedec was an example of the Lord Jesus. He was a type of Christ. The apostle used the illustration of Melchisedec because he predated the nation of

Israel, Moses, and the Levitical priesthood. He was a priest of the Most High God and was a good parallel of the Lord Jesus because he was the king of peace and he was the king of righteousness.

This demonstrates Old Testament scripture which predated the nation of Israel pointing to the Messiah. I believe the Messiah was prophesied by the Lord at the fall of man when God said the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. From then on we see the Bible is one cohesive arrow pointing to the Messiah of God. Any other view of scripture misses the point. It's all about Jesus.

The Lord Jesus abides a priest continually. He is the great high priest who is at the right hand of God and lives forever. He makes intercession on our behalf. The Lord Jesus prays for us. This is an encouraging thought to me. The Lord Jesus prayed for Peter. He told Peter that Satan would sift Peter like wheat but Jesus prayed for Peter. He prayed Peter's faith would not fail. The Lord Jesus prays for us. He knows the trials we endure. He is touched with the feelings of our weakness. He knows the hardship we endure and all we go through in this life. He tasted it as well. Read **Hebrews 2:18, Psalm 56:8**.

7:4-10

The apostle pointed out that in the Bible the account of Melchisedec came before and preceded Moses, Israel, and the Levitical priesthood. He pointed out that the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior to the Levitical priesthood because Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec and also Melchisedec blessed Abraham. Two thoughts to keep in mind. Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec because he was a descendant of Abraham, therefore he was lesser than Melchisedec. Also, since Abraham was blessed by Melchisedec this made Abraham a lesser man than Melchisedec. All of these points build the case that Melchisedec represented a priesthood which was superior than what came under Moses and the Levites. He was superior to all God outlined in Israel. Why was the apostle making this point over and over?

He was driving at the fact that the Lord Jesus is a priest forever after the same manner as Melchisedec. Some even speculate that this Melchisedec was the Lord Jesus literally. I don't think it is necessary to believe that in order to get the point the apostle made. The apostle of Hebrews was proving in a logical fashion, using scripture, through principle, and precedent, that there existed a superior high priest and priesthood. Melchisedec represented something superior than what was seen in Israel. He outlined that the Lord Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the types, shadows, and figures seen in Israel and the Levitical priesthood. Now that we have the fulfillment of everything in the Old Testament in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ we no longer live under the Old Testament religious system.

There are many cults and religious movements today that try to drag Christians into bondage to Old Testament law or practices. They try to return to the Hebrew way of life which was described in the Old Testament. But this is totally wrong. People who do this are fallen away from the gospel of grace preached by the apostles in the New Testament.

We have everything in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is all we need. He is the fulfillment of every law, type, figure, and shadow in scripture that pointed forward to Jesus. He fulfilled everything. He fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law. Jesus dotted every "i" and he crossed every "t" in scripture. God the Father placed us into Christ and we are now made complete in him. It is vain to go back and strive to follow the law. The Holy Spirit lives in us and he fulfills God's law through us as we yield to the Holy Spirit.

The Christian life is not about striving to follow laws or rules. It is about yielding and surrendering to the Holy Spirit. This is the difference between dead religion and the spiritual life. **2 Corinthians 3:6**, *"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."*

Flee from dead religion. Flee from the religious system of man-made traditions and rules and laws. Seek the Lord Jesus and he will be found. He will not turn away anyone who comes to him in simple faith. Call on the name of the Lord Jesus and be set free.

7:11-16

We know since Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and rose again on the third day that we are no longer under the Mosaic, Jewish, or Old Testament law. Look closely! There is made of necessity a change of the law. What law are we now under? Comparing scripture with scripture it is not hard to figure out that we are no longer under any of the law in the Old Testament but are now under the law of Christ! What is the law of Christ? It is the law of love. We are to love God and to love one another. And this is impossible to do unless we are filled with the Holy Spirit and have the power of God within us.

There are religious movements who want to bring Christians back under religious law. They do this by teaching Christians about Hebrew history, or tradition, or Hebrew religion. They imply this will make you a better Christian. This is the same lie told to Christians in the first church and why we have the letter to the Galatians in order to combat this evil spirit of religion.

Notice the apostle made it plain that the purpose in mentioning Melchisedec was to provide a Bible precedent to prove that Jesus is superior to Hebrew religion or priesthood. It is not necessary to believe Melchisedec was divine but he was described in a figurative manner to make a point from the Bible regarding the Lord Jesus. The entire point of the book Hebrews is to prove the superiority of the Lord Jesus over the Hebrew religion so people would not be deceived by this. May the Lord give us discernment so we are not deceived by any religious spirit today.

Another point was that Jesus came from the tribe of Judah. Under the Mosaic dispensation there were no priests who came from Judah. The Lord Jesus is our high priest forever. He is our intercessor and high priest. He is praying for us now. This is one thought which encourages me a lot. I am so glad the Lord Jesus prays for me like he prayed for his disciples and all those who would believe the gospel.

7:17-19

Who is testifying? God Almighty is testifying. He said Jesus is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

By saying that Jesus is "in the order" only means the Lord's high priesthood can be proven from the Bible by the precedent set by the account of the man Melchisedec. Melchisedec was a Biblical precedent. When scripture sets a precedent then it can be used to prove the truth of a matter.

People do this in the legal world with past court cases or decisions by judges in the past. Here the apostle used the account of Melchisedec as a precedent to drive home his point that Jesus Christ is now our high priest forever.

The Old Testament religion of the Hebrews was fulfilled completely in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Does this mean God did away with Israel or that there is no future for Israel? Absolutely not. (Read **Romans 11**).

God will fulfill his promise to Israel and give them the land he promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This was an unconditional promise by God to Abraham and did not depend on the performance of Abraham or his descendants. (**Genesis 13:15**). Later, God did make conditional promises to Israel under Moses which were dependent on Israel's obedience, but God's promise to Abraham was without conditions. The Lord Jesus will return and sit as King over all the nations and Israel will occupy the promised land during the millennium age as it is written.

The kingdom age on this earth will endure for 1,000 years, or a millennium, and then all will be completed in the New Jerusalem.

Notice he said the law made nothing perfect. Even during the time of the Old Testament nobody was made perfect through the law given through Moses. This law was only a teacher to demonstrate to men that they are sinners and in need of the Savior the Lord Jesus Christ. The law pointed sinners to the Savior the Lord Jesus Christ. (**Galatians 3:24**).

The gospel brings in a better hope than the law of God. The gospel shows us God devised a plan whereby men can be made right with God. Men are sinners and God is holy. How can God continue to be holy and yet still forgive men their sins? There needs to be someone standing between God and men. We need a mediator. Even Job recognized this and the book of Job is said to be the oldest recorded book in the Bible. (See **Job 9:33**).

God has provided himself a mediator for us. He gave his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Read **1 Timothy 2:5**.

Jesus is our great high priest. He is our intercessor. He is the mediator between God and man. God is just and he is also the justifier of those who believe the gospel. Read **Romans 3:26**.

Read **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**. Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. Believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead. Confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord.

7:20-24

The Lord Jesus became our high priest with an oath from God. The oath is included here as a quote from the Old Testament. **Psalms 110:4**, "*The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*"

The apostle interpreted the scripture from Psalms as being fulfilled in Jesus. The Lord Jesus was the fulfillment of this Old Testament prophecy. The argument made here hinged upon this scripture in Psalms and the account of Melchisedec in Genesis.

Under the Lord Jesus we have a better covenant. In the Old Testament God made a covenant with Israel based on the law given to Moses. In the New Testament we receive a better covenant based on the

finished work of the Lord Jesus in his death, burial, and resurrection. This is an unconditional covenant based up the completed and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament priests died. In the New Testament our priest, the Lord Jesus, lives forever. The New Testament in Jesus never ends because Jesus lives forever.

The priesthood of the Lord Jesus is unchangeable because he lives forever.

Every man is a sinner and needs a Savior. We are in need of the work the Lord Jesus accomplished. We can benefit from his work by believing the gospel and calling on the name of the Lord Jesus. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. He is now seated at the right hand of God the Father and makes intercession for us. He will return again at a historical future point and will rule over the nations of this planet for 1,000 years. After this is finished then all will be completed in the New Jerusalem. God will then create a new heavens and a new earth and those who trusted in Jesus to save them will live with God forever.

7:25-28

The oath points to scripture in Psalms which uses Melchisedec to describe the Son of God. The Son of God saves to the uttermost anyone who comes to God by him. He lives forever to intercede for them. What does "uttermost" mean? It means he justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies us. He saved us, he saves us, and he will save. He saves us: spirit, soul, and body. Nothing is left out. He redeems, justifies, cleanses, purifies, heals, and carries it to completion. God finishes what he starts. He never leaves or forsakes us. He does not turn anyone away who comes to him through his Son Jesus Christ. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. It is through him we draw near to God. God hears us when we come to him by faith in Jesus.

Jesus never stops praying for us. He sees each detail. He knows what happens before it happens. Every joy, sorrow, surprise, and tragedy. He sees all. He knows the end from the beginning. Nothing is hidden. He knows each sparrow who falls. We are of more value than many sparrows. He counts the hair on our head. He knows our thoughts. He hems us in behind and before and lays his hand on us. There is nowhere we can escape his notice. He hears our cry. As a father pities his children so the Lord pities those who fear him. He does not deal with us after our sins. As far as the east is from the west so far he removed our transgressions from us.

He has a plan for our life. It is a good plan. It is not evil. He will see to it that we arrive at the desired haven. He will carry us if need be. He watches over us. He is a shepherd who leads us. We are provided for. He lead us into green country and beside quiet water. He restores our soul. We mount up with wings as eagles. We run and do not grow weary. We walk and do not faint.

Though our body perishes yet the spirit is renewed every day. We do not look at what is seen but at what is unseen. What is seen is temporary. What is unseen is eternal. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Hebrews Chapter 8

8:1-6

The apostle summarized everything he said already and put all the facts together so the main point was not missed.

The reason he wrote this letter was to encourage Christians who were Jews that their faith in Jesus was legitimate. He convinced them of these facts by using Old Testament scripture and proved through the Old Testament that Jesus was the Son of God and the Messiah. He is the great high priest for Israel and indeed he is the high priest for all of humanity.

It is made even more clear in these verses that everything which God gave Moses when he set up the Levitical priesthood was a picture pointing to the reality in Christ Jesus. Everything God gave Moses was after a pattern of what was in heaven. However, what Israel had was only a copy of the reality in heaven. The great high priest who truly took away our sins was the Lord Jesus Christ. He is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. He is the real great high priest. He is the mediator of a better covenant. Why is it better? Because it does not rely on fallen man in any way whatsoever. It is better because the heavenly covenant is completely the work of God from beginning to end. It does not rely on a man to build or sustain anything. It is a house and a temple built by God himself.

The Lord Jesus has a more excellent ministry, a better covenant, and better promises. Everything Israel had was just a shadow of the reality which is only in Christ Jesus. God used Moses and Israel to paint a picture of something that was in heaven. But now heaven has come to earth in Jesus Christ. Now all that was in the Old Testament fades away because reality came to us in Jesus. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's word in the Old Testament. True believers do not live according to the law in the Old Testament. They live by the power of the Spirit given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. We are one spirit with the Lord and no longer rely on the flesh or ourselves. We died with Christ, were buried with him, and are now raised up together with him to walk a new life. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed. All things have become new. (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

8:7-13

Here we read verses which quote **Jeremiah 31:31**. It says clearly the prophecy in **Jeremiah 31:31** is the new covenant which the Lord Jesus instituted at the Last Supper. Jesus said he made a New Covenant in his blood. This is the fulfillment of **Jeremiah 31:31**. Jesus made this covenant with Israel. All his disciples were of Israel. Yet Gentiles were grafted in as well. We have examples of Gentiles being grafted in from the Old Testament. Ruth the Moabitess was grafted into Israel. Rahab was grafted in. These Gentiles were grafted in because they believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God has not changed. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. There were always people, whether Jew or Gentile, who believed in the one true God, the most high God, and by faith in him adopted into his family.

There are natural born in Israel who did not believe. There were Jews in the time of Jesus who did not believe his word and showed by their unbelief that they did not belong to God but were of the devil. The same is true today in the modern, outward church.

Notice the difference in the old and new covenant. The old covenant was external and written in stone. The new covenant is internal and written on the heart of believers. This shows the difference between external religion and a genuine relationship with God. Those who believe the gospel and abide in Christ enter God's house which is also called God's rest. It is a place where we cease to strive and rest on the fact he is pleased with the completed work of his Son Jesus Christ. All was completed for us by what the Lord Jesus accomplished in his death, burial, and resurrection. There is nothing we can add to this, and there is nothing we can take away from it. Our part is to believe, and receive, and respond to the Holy Spirit in our hearts. He speaks to us now. He does not speak to one man. He speaks to all of his sheep. His sheep hear his voice and follow him.

The old covenant under Moses fulfilled its purpose. Its purpose was to teach men they were sinners and needed a Savior. Now the Lord Jesus reveals himself as our Savior and we believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is all we need.

Hebrews Chapter 9

9:1-2

The tabernacle was a figure of the reality in heaven. Everything within this tabernacle pointed forward to the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle gave an overview of the tabernacle. The Lord Jesus fulfilled the purpose of the tabernacle. This stood out to me because the tabernacle was an outward expression of who God is. It is clear that the ark revealed the nature and character of God.

What stands out to me was that there was one sanctuary but within this there were three parts: candlestick, table, and shewbread. The entire tabernacle was a clear picture that God is one God in three persons. Notice the examples of three in one presented in the description.

The worldly sanctuary was an outward, or visible, representation of a reality which exists in heaven. We cannot see the reality with our physical eyes but this tabernacle was a picture of that reality. The real fulfillment of everything within this tabernacle is found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord revealed who he is. If we have eyes to see and ears to hear we should discern who the Lord is. When we know the Lord we understand the world and we understand human relationships.

When I understood the Lord then I understood the world around me. This world system around me is a counterfeit of who God is. It is upside down and an inverted copy of who God is. When I say "world system" I am talking about government, business, and society. The spiritual side of this machinery is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (**1 John 2:15-17**).

When we understand the Lord then our lives gain meaning, purpose, and peace. Rejecting the revelation of God leaves a man in darkness and results in spiritual and mental anguish. Read **Isaiah 55:6-8**.

9:3-5

I want to pause and think about a topic that is not exactly in the context of the purpose of this letter. Sometimes there are layers in scripture which we can explore besides the top most layer. The layer I

want to ponder in these comments is summed up in asking the question, "what do these verses tell us about the nature and character of God"?

I see three elements in this one ark. The ark was described precisely as containing three elements, which are: golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant. There are three elements in this one container. I believe this was a picture of the "three in one" nature of God. Further, I think we can also see the three tent poles God used in the Bible to erect the house of faith. Those tent poles are three roles: prophet, priest, and king. Those roles are represented in three distinct periods of time in which God progressively reveals who he is to man. The first was Israel which corresponds to the prophet. The second is the church which corresponds to the priest. The third is the nations which corresponds to the king. Take another look at these three elements and ask which one corresponds with which role and time period.

The tables of the covenant, of course, represent the first day, which is Israel, and also the prophet. Aaron's rod that budded represents the second day, which is the church, and also the priest. The golden pot of manna is the third day, which concerns the nations under King Jesus. The third day is the day of the King. It is the 1,000 year millennium in which Jesus will reign as King over the nations on the earth.

Prophet, priest, and king. Israel, church, and the nations. Tables of the covenant, Aaron's rod that budded, and the golden pot of manna. This third day, the pot of manna, ties directly to the phrase "hidden manna" in **Revelation 2:17**. It is in contrast to the "public" manna which Israel ate in the wilderness. This hidden manna is about something in the future that has not yet been revealed but which those who are "overcomers" can even now eat and participate in.

This is the most important thing, besides the gospel, that I have ever learned from the Holy Spirit. It is my burning desire to share this with others who have ears to hear, and a heart to receive the revelation of God who is three in one.

God is three in one. Prophet, priest, and king. Israel, the church, and the nations. Three days, and then all will be complete in the New Jerusalem.

9:6-10

The tabernacle and service was erected as a temporary system until Messiah arrived. It was a figure which pointed forward "until the time of reformation". This reformation was when the Son of God, Jesus Christ, fulfilled the Old Testament. He is the prophet Moses said would come. He is the high priest pictured in the religious system of the Old Testament. He is the King which Israel looked forward to who will reign over the nations.

Since the high priest was only able to enter once a year into the holiest place of the tabernacle the Holy Spirit said while this first tabernacle stood men had no free entrance to the throne of God's grace.

It is only after this religious system was done away with and men believed the gospel that they obtained freedom to come to the throne of God's grace to find grace and mercy to help in time of need.

The Lord Jesus made a way for us to approach God with confidence. We do not approach God on the basis of good works or our righteousness. We can only approach God's throne of grace on the basis of the finished and completed work of Christ. We go to God in the name of his Son Jesus Christ. There is no other way.

He who has the Son of God has life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have life. This is the only way to know God, commune with him, and receive his mercy. We can only find the mercy seat in the holiest place by faith in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way.

Everything God gave Israel in the service of the tabernacle revealed who God is, how man can relate to God, and was a picture which pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we understand this and believe the truth we are set free from religious oppression. We no longer need a man to stand between us and God. We do not need any man to forgive our sins, hear our confession, or do anything for us. Jesus did it all for us through his death, burial, and resurrection.

We have direct access to God through the finished work of Christ. Because of what the Lord Jesus accomplished through his death, burial, and resurrection we can now approach God with confidence and receive everything for this life and the life to come. God has reconciled us to himself through his son Jesus Christ.

9:11-14

The religious system in the Old Testament is considered dead works. Religion is dead works. Rituals, systems, or observance of days is dead works. Anything a man thinks he can do to add to or take away from what Christ accomplished through his death, burial, and resurrection is dead works. The Lord Jesus did everything for us.

The Lord Jesus is our high priest. He has a perfect tabernacle which is not made by human hands. The sacrifice he offered was his own sinless, perfect blood which was shed on the cross of Calvary. He was buried, and then on the third day he rose again. The Lord Jesus ascended to heaven and offered himself without sin or spot to God. He has purged us from all of our sins so we can have a clean conscience and serve the living God.

From these verses we learn Jesus was sinless. This shows that he was fully God. He was also a man because his blood was shed on the cross. Jesus is fully God. Jesus is fully man. He is the God Man. God is one God in three persons. He is Father, he is Son, and he is Holy Spirit. Three persons. One God. God is three in one. Any other teaching, including modalism, denies either the humanity or the divinity of Jesus Christ. If he is not God then he was not sinless. If he is not man then he could not have been a substitute for men. He is both God and man.

It is crucial for us to see this. Jesus offered himself to God, meaning the Father in heaven. What are the implications of this? Here in these verses we also have "through the eternal Spirit". In these brief verses we have Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We cannot allow people to trick us into thinking the doctrine of the Trinity is non-essential. It is absolutely essential. The truth of the gospel is tied in with the truth that God is three in one. Also, remember the blood mentioned here is vital. Without blood there is no forgiveness. **Hebrews 9:22**, "*...without shedding of blood is no remission*". Remember the gospel. 1

Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13; Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 16:30-31. Do not add to the gospel. Do not take away from it.

9:15-17

The word "testament" might be easier understood in English as a "will". When someone is preparing for death if they have property or have final wishes they make a document called their "will". This includes distributing property, resources, or wishes on how their funeral service and burial will be conducted.

With that in mind let us read these verses again. The Lord Jesus is the one who mediates the new "will" of God. He puts it into place. Moses was used by God in the Old Testament to be a mediator of the old testament "will". That will was put into effect with the blood of animals which were sacrificed.

However, the new "will" is put into place by the Lord Jesus Christ and his death on the cross of Calvary. Jesus died in our place, he was buried, and he rose again. Through this process the new will is put into action. The old was fulfilled in Christ and when he died the old will died with him. When Jesus rose from the dead the new will of God was put into action.

A will is never read or acted on until the death of the person who made the will. When Jesus died his will was put into motion. When he rose from the dead it was put into action. He is now the mediator of a new testament, a new covenant, a new will. We are no longer living under the Old Testament. We now live in the day of the New Testament. Those who try to live according to the Old Testament are uninformed, or at worst, purposely deceiving others for the purpose of gaining a following.

Another part which stands out to me is the phrase "the promise of eternal inheritance". It is interesting to do a study of the bible and understand what inheritance means to Israel, and also to the church. Understand the differences, and also understand what is common with the word "inheritance". Does a Christian automatically receive an inheritance? If so, why does Jesus warn believers, and his own disciples, and the churches in Revelation about losing their reward (inheritance). Why does the apostle Paul warn that a Christian can be saved "as through fire" and lose reward?

Do not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the power of God unto our salvation. Be a participant in the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.

9:18-22

The Old Testament religious system included animal sacrifices. The significance of these sacrifices was the shedding of blood. The lesson was that the wages of sin is death. Only blood can atone for sin. This was why the Lord Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins. He is our blood atonement.

This is why all religions outside the gospel of Jesus Christ are completely false and devil-inspired. There is only one way sin can be atoned for. Sin can only be washed away by blood. Specifically, the only thing that can wash away our sins is the blood of Jesus Christ. He is our atonement. He was the Lamb of God sacrificed so that our sins could be forgiven and washed away.

The religious system in Israel was a type pointing forward by faith to this ultimate sacrifice and atonement which the Lord Jesus made for us at Calvary.

People who are offended by the requirement of the blood atonement reject the holiness of God. They do not understand that God is holy and that he is completely separate from sin and cannot excuse sin.

The only answer to sin is death. There is no alternative. God himself is eternal life. Sin is separation from God so it automatically brings death. Sin is spiritual death, soul death, and physical death are rolled into one. Those who are spiritually dead in their trespass and sins due to unbelief will be eternally separated from God (eternal life) when they die physically. Once we leave our body the soul can only continue in the direction in which it was already heading. Death will not turn us around or cause us to repent. We will just continue in the direction we were already heading.

The blood atonement made by the Lord Jesus is the only hope of escape from eternal death and darkness. The abyss of darkness will automatically suck the soul of every unbeliever straight to hell fire. The only hope to escape this fate is to call on the name of Jesus Christ, to trust in his atonement, to believe the gospel: *Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day, according to the scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).*

9:23-26

The Lord did not go into an earthly tabernacle to offer his sacrifice but instead he went into the heavenly tabernacle to offer himself to God once and for all. These verses point to the truth that the work which Christ accomplished in his death, burial, and resurrection is complete. It will never happen again. What he did was once and for all. It is finished. It is complete. The Lord will never go through the crucifixion again because this one sacrifice is sufficient for all eternity.

On this truth we take our stand in the finished and completed work of the gospel. This is why it is so important we maintain that no one can add anything to the gospel, and no one can take anything away from the gospel. It is finished. Men who attempt to add their own works to the gospel do not comprehend what Christ did for them. Our only work now is to believe in the Lord Jesus whom the Father sent into this world. He is our salvation. He is eternal life. He is our righteousness and our sanctification and our redemption. He is everything we need for this life and the life to come. **1 Corinthians 1:30.**

There are religious movements trying to turn Christians back to living like a Hebrew or a Jew. But this is unnecessary and dangerous. This is what Paul warns us about in the letter to the Galatians and throughout his epistles. He made it clear that when Jesus died on the cross he nailed God's law to the cross. The law of God is fulfilled in Christ. The entire religious system, including observing of days, was fulfilled in Christ. Now, we are only to live by the power of the Holy Spirit living within us. We live by the Spirit now. We do not live according to the law. The law could never impart spiritual life. Spiritual life is a gift from God. Spiritual life flows from deep within, out of our spirit, and affects our daily living in such a way that we supernaturally in a natural way express obedience to God through walking and living and agreeing with the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews is an exhortation to Christians who are tempted to turn back to dead religion or religious ritual or religious systems. People have different motivations for doing this. Some are sincere and zealous in a desire to follow God and are deceived into thinking that observing special days, or wearing special clothing, or observing certain rituals will make them more holy or spiritual. It will not accomplish that

goal. The only way for a man to become more spiritual is to live by faith in the gospel: the finished, completed work of Christ Jesus.

The gospel is simple. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**. Read Paul's application of the gospel in the book of Romans, especially in chapters 6-8, in order to understand the practical application of the gospel to the life of the believer.

Abide in him. Stay in the gospel. Do not add to the gospel, and do not take anything away from it. Jesus is Lord. God raised him from the dead on the third day. He is now seated at the right hand of God as our high priest and lives forever to intercede on our behalf. He is the only mediator between God and men. **1 John 2:28; Revelation 22:18-19; Hebrews 1:13; Hebrews 7:19, 25**.

9:27-28

Reincarnation is a lie. The teaching that our soul is recycled and comes back as an animal or plant or something else is a lie. What does the Bible say? It is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment. There is no second chance after you die to come back and try again to do better or improve. This life is all you get, then you die, then you are judged by your Creator.

Since this is the reality and the facts of life, then what should our reaction be? We should fear God and make sure we find out what we are supposed to believe and do while we still have time in this body. After you leave this body it is too late. Your chances will be over. There is no second chance to change your mind after death.

The Lord Jesus offered himself one time to bear our sins. He died on the cross for us so that we would not suffer the penalty of our sins. However, it is only those who believe and receive and remember the gospel who can benefit from what Christ did. Christ died for every person who ever lived, but only those who believe in Christ will benefit from what he did. God gave us free will. We can choose to either believe or not believe. God gives us plenty of room to go our own way. Just remember, if you turn your back on God, you will still stand before him one day and give an account for your life. You will not escape your judgment day.

There are Christians who are looking forward to the return of the Lord Jesus. There is a promise here for those Christians. Unto them that look for him shall he appear a second time. He will not return as a lowly Savior to die on a cross. He will return to receive us to himself that where he is we may be also.

I want to be ready, waiting, and looking for him when he returns. I do not want to be ashamed at his return. I want to be confident that when he comes I was looking him, I believed in him, I longed for him. This attitude must be cultivated by staying in God's word, by praying every day, and by choosing every day to believe God's word over your own opinions, emotions, or what the world says. The world will constantly try to conform you into its mold. Resist this. Do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Renew your mind in the truth. The truth will set you free.

Jesus is returning again! Whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we need to be ready. The dead in Christ shall rise first, and then we which are alive and remain will join them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Let us comfort one another with these facts.

Hebrews Chapter 10

10:1-4

All of the religious activity in Israel with sacrifices never solved the sin problem. Religious sacrifices were a reminder of sins. Their conscience could not rest easy by rituals and sacrifices. Why? Because the religious sacrifices was a shadow of the good things to come. Those sacrifices could never make the people who gave them perfect. It was not possible that the sacrifice of animals could take away sins.

The only way that they or us today could have our sins taken away was for the Lord Jesus to fulfill those types in the Old Testament. The Lord Jesus fulfilled the Law and the purpose of the religious sacrifices. Through the sacrifice of himself once and for all he put away all of our sins forever. He became the sacrificial lamb for our sins. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. He is our atonement. He is our substitute and through him God wiped away all our sins.

How can we benefit from this today? By believing the gospel and trusting in the Lord Jesus God will wash away your sins. What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus! What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Humble yourself before God and believe the gospel. The Bible says that if a man confesses with his mouth that "Jesus is Lord" and believes in his heart that God raised Jesus from the dead that he will be saved. **Romans 10:9-10,13**. It is simple as that. Why don't people choose to believe this good news?

Satan blinds people (**2 Corinthians 4:3-4**) from hearing and receiving the truth. Human nature is by default on the side of the devil, and will lean toward unbelief and rejecting the gospel. That is because everyone born into the world since Adam and Eve were born sinners. We were born into sin. There is no hope of being reconciled to God outside God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said in **John 14:6**, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

Acts 4:12, *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."*

Believe the gospel. Trust in the Lord Jesus. Commit your heart and life to God and seek the Lord Jesus. There is no other way to be saved. There is no other hope of heaven outside the Lord Jesus.

10:5-10

The apostle took prophecy in the Old Testament to prove that Christ fulfilled the Old Testament. The part which stands out to me is this: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Everything in the life of a Christian is based on the finished and completed work of Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. We were justified by his work, we are sanctified by his work, and we will be glorified by his work. All this is the work of Christ from beginning to end, and is all contained in what Jesus accomplished through his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection.

Forgiveness and atonement is an important aspect of this work. Along with atonement He also saved us from ourselves. He saved us from the world system. He saved us from Satan. He sanctified us and made us holy.

Because of the work of Christ the Holy Spirit works in the life of a believer to make him more holy. How do we respond to the work of the Holy Spirit? Our part is to believe the gospel and when the Holy Spirit puts his finger on anything in our life we say, "Lord, you are right. I am wrong." And then we trust in the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse us, purify us, and make us holy. The purpose of God the Father is to conform us to the image of his Son Jesus Christ. This is a work which was accomplished in eternity through the finished work of Christ.

As we walk through time in these mortal bodies the Holy Spirit applies the work of the Lord Jesus to us. It is our part to believe in the gospel. We abide in the gospel. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again. Don't allow family, friends, enemies, the world, or any devil to move you from your simple faith in the Lord Jesus.

I had friends who were moved away from the simplicity of the gospel with disastrous results. I had one friend who lost his life after he backslid away from faith in the living God. This was a warning to me, to never, ever turn your back on the living God, but fear the Lord and worship him only.

Do not worship yourself by living for self. Do not seek to exalt yourself in any way by making a name for yourself or seeking a title or position. Don't try to be somebody. Rest in the Lord and trust in the Lord that he is your life. He is all I need.

10:11-18

Our sins were washed away through the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. There is no need for another sacrifice to be made. Notice where the Bible said Jesus is now. He is at the right hand of God. The Lord's enemies will be made into his footstool. In other words, a time will come when all those who oppose the Lord Jesus will be under his feet.

This points forward to the return of the Lord Jesus. All the nations of the world will be under the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will reign over the nations with a scepter of iron. Read **Revelation 19:15**. The Lord Jesus will return at a future historical point in time. He will set his feet on this earth again. He will judge the nations. He will judge each individual. Everyone will give an account to the Lord for their life.

It will be during that thousand years of earthly kingdom when Israel will receive the fulfillment of the promises made to the nation of Israel. The church will be there during this thousand years as the bride of Christ. After this thousand years is over Satan will be let loose one last time. He will gather all the nations of the earth in rebellion against the Lord Jesus and will attack Jerusalem. This will be the last battle. God himself will destroy the enemies and cast Satan into the lake of fire forever.

After this the New Jerusalem will come and God will make a new heaven and a new earth and will be with his people forever.

10:19-22

In the Old Testament the high priest entered the holiest place within the tabernacle once a year. However, Jesus is now our great high priest and he entered into the heavenly holy place once and for all. Now the brethren of the Lord Jesus can have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus made a way so we can draw near to God with confidence. He will listen to us. He listens to us. He does not listen because we earn it or deserve it, but because the Lord Jesus died in our place on the cross. God listens to us because of the blood which Jesus shed on the cross. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. He is now at the right hand of God waiting for his enemies to be made his footstool. He lives forever to pray for his brethren.

Notice the descriptive words used: "new" and "living way". This way of approaching God was not always available. It is only now since the finished work of Christ that we can approach God in the holiest place. We can now draw near to God's mercy seat and talk to him in the name of his Son Jesus Christ. He will hear us because of the atoning work of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we can draw near to God with a true heart that does not have a bad conscience. Our conscience was cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. If we relied on religious rituals or good works then our conscience would trouble us because men know that religious ritual and good works do not cancel sins. But when a man hears the gospel and believes then he finally has relief. The spirit in man will witness to him that the gospel is true and that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses him from all sin and unrighteousness.

We were washed; we were cleansed. The blood of Jesus once and for all cleansed us. The word of God renews us and cleanses us each day as we read, study, meditate and encourage each other in the truth in Jesus.

The message in Hebrews is good news. We should encourage our hearts with the truth in this letter and never submit to the lies of the devil. Rituals and religious systems are not necessary for eternal life. All we need for eternal life is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Call on his name. He died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day.

10:23-25

Folks enjoy using this verse to beat fellow Christians over the head in regard to missing "church" services. I totally agree we need the body of Christ for our own spiritual well being and also as a way to serve others and contribute. However, I take issue with the definition of what people call the "church". Most folks when they say "church" refer to a denominational building where people file in, sit in a pew, put money in a plate, and listen to a sermon. That is what I see in what folks call "church".

The Lord shows us what church is. He said where two or three gather together in his name that he is there with them. I often found more edification and opportunity to help someone when it was only myself, one another, or two other people. Those are precious moments when the Holy Spirit has the true freedom to encourage, exhort, and comfort us.

I cannot remember being in a "church", listening to one man read his sermon, where I felt that way, or had the opportunity to impart a spiritual gift as well. This is what the true church is supposed to be. A

gathering of believers who all have the opportunity in the meeting to impart to others a spiritual gift. If you go into a meeting and it is only a one man show then it is not a biblical, New Testament church meeting. It is a religious meeting. This style of religious meeting was passed down probably from the religion of the Catholics.

Those who condemn by saying "forsake not the assembling" should also remember that this verse also says "consider one another" and "exhort one another". How can I consider and exhort others if church consists of sitting in a pew and listening to a preacher give his opinions on the Bible?

Some churches see this problem and they attempt what is called "cell" home groups or home meetings within the context of the traditional man-made church. This is just putting a band aid on the real problem. They still want to hold on to their salary, budget, and their building. They still try to make a name for themselves instead of making the name of Jesus Christ great and glorious.

Don't be deceived. Most of what people call "church" is just a religious branch of the world system. Jesus would say the same things to the religious leaders of today that he said to the religious leaders in his own day. Woe to you hypocrites!

May God send revival to this country again. I became a Christian at the end of the Jesus people revival of the 1960s and 1970s. I was saved through a ministry which was born during that time of revival.

I hope that God sends another revival and raises up a new generation of Holy Ghost radicals who throw off all man-made religion and get back to basics of New Testament church life.

10:26-31

There is a stern warning in these verses. Up until now I don't remember a more straight forward and stern warning in the book of Hebrews.

The apostle reminded the Hebrew Christians of the God who took vengeance and who was to be feared. It is fearful to fall into the hands of the living God. There was a comparison here between how God judged people in the Old Testament, and it is startling to discover that God's judgment is more severe and swift in the New Testament dispensation.

The apostle's point here was that the greater revelation we have the more accountable we become. Christians in the New Testament have a much greater accountability than Israel did in the Old Testament. Look at how God judged Israel, and realize that was the Lord dealing with people who were not as accountable as we are today. This should instill the fear of God in our hearts.

Also, another basic truth is the fact that we have no other way to be reconciled with God except through the Lord Jesus Christ. If we reject the gospel of Jesus Christ then we have no other way to be reconciled with God. There is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through the Son Jesus Christ.

There is no other sacrifice for sin except the sacrifice which Jesus made on the cross of Calvary. There is no other way to be saved except by faith in the gospel. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. To turn your back on the gospel is to condemn your own soul to an eternity

separated from your creator. God is light and God is love. What is the result of separation from light and from love? It is more terrifying than anyone alive can imagine.

Continue in the gospel. Do not be moved away from the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not follow philosophy, psychology, or world religions. Everything outside of the gospel of Jesus Christ is a lie and comes from the father of lies. Stay in the gospel and be saved and have eternal life.

10:32-39

The apostle appealed to their previous show of faith and sacrifice to encourage them. This was a good way to persuade people to endure. Remember what you already endured! Look at what you already went through. When we look back at how far we have come it is an encouragement to endure until we finish the course. It is not enough to begin the journey. We must also complete the journey. God's grace enables us to continue forward one day at a time. We look to Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith.

These Hebrew Christians suffered persecution. They also associated themselves with others, including this apostle, who lost everything because of their faith in the Lord Jesus. The apostle now reminded them of the price they paid for their faith. Are they now going to let that history of suffering be for nothing?

Notice we receive a principle for enduring the loss of material goods. The Christian should not be holding onto material possessions but instead focus his mind on the enduring treasure laid up in heaven. The Lord specifically taught his disciples to lay up treasure in heaven and not on earth. Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break in and steal. But rather store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt and where thieves cannot break in and steal. Where our treasure is our heart will be also.

The Lord Jesus and the apostles were united in their message regarding money and wealth. They underlined that it is safer to be poor and have great faith. Most Christians will not have an abundance because there is a high probability of being corrupted by wealth. James even went so far as to say it is the poor who are rich in faith.

The apostle said the return of the Lord was in a little while. If we measure time from a human perspective it does not seem to be a little while. But the Bible does not measure time like we do. Time is measured according to God's standard of measurement. The scripture says with the Lord a thousand years are like one day. The Lord does not measure time like men do. We cannot say, therefore, that the proclamation of the Lord returning "in a little while" is false. From the perspective of eternity what happens on earth seems like a little while. How will you or I measure time after we have been in heaven for a million years? What will be a "little while" to you then?

The message is to be patient, endure and continue to have strong faith in the Lord Jesus. We have heaven to look forward to. We have the return of the Lord to look forward to. These promises are not far off. They will happen in a little while. It is our part to believe and patiently endure.

Hebrews Chapter 11

11:1

This chapter provides a long list of heroes from the Old Testament who overcame by faith.

My question is why talk about faith? So far, the apostle used Old Testament scripture to prove that Jesus is the great high priest for believers and that Jesus is the fulfillment of everything in the Old Testament.

But now the subject seemed to change. The apostle switched from proving facts about Jesus to trying to inspire the Christians who suffered for their faith in the Lord Jesus. He turned to Old Testament examples to encourage and comfort and exhort the Hebrew Christians to continue to have faith in Jesus and not give up or give in.

He began by defining faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. What are the things he already said in Hebrews we are look forward to?

He pointed us to heaven. He pointed us to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. By faith we can take hold on these great truths to bring stability and endurance to our soul. We grasp these great future events by faith right now. When we do so it produces endurance, perseverance, and patience in the face of an unrelenting world system which hates God and persecutes Christians.

Faith is evidence of what we cannot see. We are exhorted not to look at the things which are seen because the things which are seen are "temporary". Instead, we are to look at the things which we cannot see because the things we cannot see are eternal.

It is impossible to grasp this except by faith. But we can have faith. We can hear the truth, receive it into our hearts, and by faith hold the promise of God's kingdom and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another thing I want to talk about in this chapter 11 of Hebrews is the picture of faith portrayed here in contrast to the American mega church prosperity faith promoted by false preachers.

The faith in this chapter is not about money, or wealth, or health. It is about seeing an invisible kingdom and then enduring whatever the world throws at us because we see beyond this temporary world we live in now.

Notice in the examples given some people overcome temporary persecution or difficulty, but others died or lived in caves and holes in the ground. All were commended for their faith. What kind of faith is this? It is not a faith rooted in what we gain for ourselves in this fleeting few years of life on earth. It is a faith rooted in the eternal kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the beginning and the end of this faith. Jesus is the object of this faith. It is not faith in faith. It is not faith in ourselves. It is not faith in having a positive mental attitude. It is faith in the invisible kingdom of God where we are heading if we believe the simple gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. All who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved.

11:2-3

When God created the universe he spoke. His word framed everything created. We know Jesus is called the Word of God. Everything that is created was made by Jesus Christ. Read **Colossians 1:16**.

There is a visible world we can see, hear, feel, taste, and touch. There is also an invisible, spiritual world. The Bible constantly speaks of this invisible world around us. Here we learn that the things which are visible were not made "of things which do appear". In other words the visible world around us was created by an invisible pattern. God's word can be heard, but when he spoke his word, a visible creation came into being. The visible world originated from the invisible word of God spoken by the Father.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were all involved in the creation of the visible world. We know from scripture that Jesus is the Word of God. If anyone has eyes to see they can look around at the natural world and it testifies to the nature and character and personality of God. Read **Psalm 19:1-2**.

Man is unable to create in this fashion. Man can only use what God already created and fashion, combine, and blend it. But man cannot create something out of nothing. Man cannot speak things into existence. This is the great error of the positive confession and prosperity gospel. Men are not gods. There is only God. Read **Isaiah 43:10-11**.

God is the only one who speak things into existence. Not men. Those who attempt to do this are practicing a form of witchcraft and are employing the help of evil spirits to change the natural world around them. Devils have limited supernatural power and can effect changes and make things happen. Men are deceived, however, into thinking that what they "confess" makes these things happen. It is a deception of the devil to make men think they have magical powers. This was translated into the Christian world and called "faith" but the methods and practices are the same as witchcraft or sorcery.

Do not be deceived into believing that a positive confession will bring you health, or money, or peace in life. Only the Lord can give you these things if it is his will. From reading the Bible I believe most of the time for Christians it is not God's will to give them more resources than what they need to live on a daily in dependence on him as their provider, protector, and portion.

Read **James 2:5**. That verse speaks volumes to the false priorities of the prosperity gospel. The prosperity gospel fills men's hearts with idolatry and covetousness. It should be completely shunned, and everyone who preaches it, and those who refuse to repent of that false gospel.

God created the heavens and the earth. He did this by speaking his word. God can also speak into our individual lives and cause things to happen that we never could have made happen for ourselves. Trust in God and let him work things out in your life. Let us surrender to God in every situation in our lives and ask him to speak his word into our life and situation. The Lord is able to do a much better job than we can. Am I suggesting we be passive? No, I think a man who aggressively seeks God in prayer is not being passive. He just knows that without the word of God he is helpless and he waits on the Lord to

see what God will do for him. He stands ready to hear the word of God spoken to him and when he hears he springs into action to obey the voice of the Lord. Jesus said his sheep hear his voice and follow him.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 outlines the gospel for us. Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. Everyone who believes in their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and confesses with their mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord will be saved. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is God the Son. He will return again and establish his kingdom upon this earth. Each one of us will stand before God's judgment seat and give an account for our lives. The judgment of believers will be for rewards in God's kingdom. The judgment of those who rejected God and did not believe will be a judgment of damnation of their souls into an eternal lake of fire. I urge you today to believe the gospel and call upon the name of the Lord Jesus and be saved.

11:4

Abel was the first man of faith remembered in this chapter. This chapter lists all of the heroes of faith in the Bible. Abel was the second son of Adam and Eve. His older brother was Cain. Cain killed his brother Abel. Why?

This scripture pointed back to the story of Cain and Abel found in Genesis chapter 4. What did the Holy Spirit think was the most important event to remember in the life of Cain and Abel? This event demonstrated how these two men related to God through worship.

Abel worshiped God according to faith. Faith opened his spiritual eyes to see the correct order in which man can approach God and have a relationship with God.

Because man is a fallen sinner the only way we can come to God is by acknowledging our condition and seeking reconciliation on the basis of the only way man can draw near to God.

The Bible teaches that in order for our sins to be removed there must a blood sacrifice. This is why the Lord Jesus Christ came and died for us on the cross at Calvary. He shed his own blood as a substitute for us. He died so we would not have to die and be separated from God.

By faith Abel saw this truth. Perhaps his parents taught him, and when he heard the gospel he believed. In his heart he recognized the truth when he heard it and believed the gospel taught to him. Perhaps God showed Abel by a revelation the truth of the gospel.

Abel's sacrifice proved he was righteous. The sacrifice did not make him righteous. It was a work which demonstrated he had saving faith in the gospel which God revealed to him.

Not so with Cain. Cain came to God on Cain's terms. He did not accept God's method of reconciliation and went about to establish his own righteousness before God. Cain was the beginning of all false, man-made religion that exists in the world today. It is an attempt to worship God in a rebellious, willful manner that has no regard for what God said in his word.

Cain and Abel are important in the Bible because they show us two men who lived in the same house but were completely different. One man was of the spirit. One man was of the flesh. One man humbled himself before God. One man exalted himself and worshiped himself.

When man rejects the blood sacrifice God provided he resorts to shedding the blood of another sacrifice. Men do this through words, actions, and attitudes. The brother of the flesh always seeks to kill the brother of the spirit. Those who reject the blood of Jesus Christ eventually shed the blood of someone else.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day.

11:5

The brief history we have in the Bible of Enoch is recorded in **Genesis 5:18-24**. Verse 24, *"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."*

This is what **Hebrews 11:5** points back to when it said that Enoch was "translated that he should not see death". This meant that God raptured Enoch and took him to heaven. The only other person we know of like this in the Bible whom God raptured or translated in a similar manner was Elijah who was caught up by a chariot from heaven.

The description of a rapture is not isolated to the New Testament. This is a biblical precedent for the doctrine of the rapture going all the way back to Genesis chapter 5. God's ability to translate someone should not be difficult to believe, since it is right here in the beginning of the Bible and there are other examples of this same thing.

There is also another example in the book of Acts when God raptured someone. In Acts chapter 9 Philip was transported supernaturally from one place to another by the Lord.

Acts 8:39, *"And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing".*

Raptures, a catching away, or you can call it "translation" are throughout the Bible.

There will be another rapture which the Bible talks about. It will involve all of those in the past and present who have believed on the Lord Jesus and are saved. Read **1 Thessalonians 4:15-17**. This is what Christians are looking forward to. If you set your mind on things above then you expect the Lord to rapture you up to be with him in the air. This is what we are looking forward to. This is the hope of the born again, Spirit filled Christian today.

11:6

This is one of those verses you want to memorize. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Why? Because our entire relationship with the Lord is based on faith in his word. If you do not have faith then how can you have a relationship with God? It is impossible for God to have a relationship with you or you to have a relationship with him without faith.

Someone once told me they believed in God but could not believe or understand the Bible. This person had a God of their own understanding. Their God was something they made up in their imagination. The only people who cannot understand the Bible are those who are not willing to stand under it. Intellectual pride makes a person unable to comprehend the Bible because it is a spiritual book. The only person who can understand the Bible is the one who is willing to humble himself and obey what is in the Bible. Humility comes before understanding. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Notice the promise given in this verse. God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. If we will put aside our own will and set our heart to seek the Lord then we can find him. He is not far off somewhere. He is right here waiting for us to set our hearts on seeking him. Those who seek the Lord with all of their heart will find him.

This is a challenge because the world is filled with a million things to distract us from seeking the Lord. It takes a conscious decision on our part to simplify our lives so we have the time and energy to seek the Lord. I have found the best time for me to pray and seek the Lord is first thing in the morning after a cup of coffee and I've woken up. I will read a Bible passage and then pray and seek the Lord.

There is also a time to have a special season of intense seeking after the Lord. Whenever we come to a crossroads in life and we need to hear from the Lord, or we do not know how to go forward in life, it is time to seek the Lord with special intensity and focus. I've found that fasting during this time helps. Fasting can be from food, or also from entertainment. Changing your normal routine to set aside quiet time with the Lord is needed during these fork in the road moments in life.

Remember the promise of God. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Have faith in God. He is here. He hears. He will respond to our cry. Read **1 John 5:14-15**.

11:7

Noah is first mentioned in Genesis chapter 5. His story and the account of the flood continues through Genesis chapter 10. Noah is also mentioned in several places throughout the entire bible in **1 Chronicles 1:4, Isaiah 54:9, Ezekiel 14:14, 1 Peter 3:20, and 2 Peter 2:5**. The Lord also talks about Noah in **Matthew 24:37-38** and **Luke 17:26-27**. The Lord Jesus spoke of Noah as a historical man who literally lived and that the flood literally happened. If we dismiss the account of Noah and the flood then we have to discount 1 Chronicles, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Peter, and the Lord Jesus, not to mention Matthew and Luke who recorded the words of the Lord Jesus. In other words, the account of Noah is woven so tightly throughout the Bible it is impossible to remove this from scripture without completely tearing apart the Bible.

Noah heard the voice of God. The Lord warned Noah that a flood was coming that would destroy everything on the face of the earth with water. Noah believed God's word which he heard and followed God's instructions to build an ark which would preserve himself, his family, and a sampling of all the animals on the planet. How this happened can only be explained as a miracle. God had to be the one who brought all of those animals to Noah.

It is interesting that by Noah's obedience to God in building the ark he condemned the world. When we preach the gospel of Jesus Christ those who hear and believe are saved. At the same time those who

hear and reject the gospel are damned. This is the double edged sword of God's word. We see this through the entire Bible. Those who hear, believe, and receive are saved. Those who hear and do not believe fall under the wrath of God.

Noah's flood is also a type of water baptism. It is similar to how God brought Israel through the Red Sea. Noah was saved through the water. Israel was saved through the water. What both types show is the believer's salvation from the world system. The believer is resurrected on the other side of what destroys those who are in the world system. In the same way this gives us further insight into what happened when God placed us in Christ Jesus. We were crucified with Christ, we died with him on the cross, we were buried with him, and then we rose again with him on the third day. Scripture teaches that this is the truth. As we continue to believe the gospel it will exert greater power over us and save us from ourselves, from sin, from the world system, and from the devil.

Righteousness is by faith. This was true of Noah and is true of us today. Men were always saved in this manner. We hear God's word, we believe God's word, and we receive God's word. We agree with God. God is right and I am wrong. I agree with the Lord on everything. The more we grow in agreement the Lord Jesus the more we are set free from ourselves, from sin, from this world system, and from the enemy. May the word of God dwell in our hearts richly!

11:8-10

The account of Abraham began in Genesis 11 and occupied the majority of the rest of the book of Genesis, including the account of his sons and the promise God gave Abraham.

When Abraham heard the voice of the Lord he believed. He believed the voice of the Lord when God spoke to him. He heard God's word, he believed God's word, and he received it into his heart. He made decisions in life based on hearing God's word and believing God's word which he heard.

God called Abraham and promised to give him and his family an inheritance. This inheritance included Canaan. Abraham journeyed in Canaan like a stranger, living in tents, and moving around. Notice, however, the summary: he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. This was a spiritual revelation from God about the city of God that was not made by men but made by God. I believe this is the same city John saw in Revelation and went into detail describing. John gave exact measurements and the type of materials the city was made from. How did Abraham know to look for this city?

God revealed it to him. The Holy Spirit shows us things to come. Jesus said the Holy Spirit shows us things to come. He reveals it to us by the Holy Spirit. Abraham not only believed in the promise about the land inheritance, but he saw beyond this to the city of God. His true destination was that city. He lived in the promised land as a stranger, a pilgrim, as someone who was passing through.

This is how we live today. Our lives are temporary. We live in the temporary tent of this body, which we will put off, and enter real life in the city of God. Believe the gospel and be saved so that you can see this city one day. Read **1 John 5:12**.

11:11-12

Hebrews 11:11-12, *"Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable."*

God promised Abraham and Sara they would have a son. This promise took a long time to fulfill. From my reckoning maybe 25 years between the time God told them and when it finally happened. A year before Sara had Isaac God came to them again and repeated his promise to them. By this time they were so old that Sara could not physically have children, but she had a baby anyway. With God nothing is impossible. God created the heavens and the earth. He created man. God was more than able to give Sara the ability to bear children in her old age.

From this verse in Hebrews we get insight into Sara's life. She believed in God. When she heard the word from God she believed what he said. As a result of her faith, the number of her descendants were like the number of stars in the sky or the number of sands on the seashore.

Sara did not have anything except the word God. She was commended for believing in God's word. She heard him, believed, and received his word into her heart. God honored her faith and fulfilled his word to her. It was a miracle that she had this son Isaac.

God will fulfill his promises to us. It might take a while for the fulfillment of God's promises, but we are called to endure patiently. Patient endurance with joyfulness. This is what Christians are called to. We continue to hope and trust in the Lord, and endure with patience all trials. Don't forget God's promise. He will fulfill the word which he spoke to us. He will never leave us and he will never forsake us.

If any man come to the Lord Jesus he will not be turned away. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved. This is God's promise in his word. The Lord will not fail to do what he said he would do. We must be patient and wait on him.

11:13-16

This list in Hebrews chapter 11 of people who believed God's word eventually died. They died in faith. They did not receive the promises during their earthly life but they saw the promises of God far off and embraced them and confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.

Stop a minute and think about this mental framework of thinking. What does this mean?

It means they did not live focused on the temporary life here. This attitude is in stark contrast to American churches who are focused on here and now and how to live a better or successful life here and now.

The people in this list in Hebrews had their mind set on heaven and the world coming after this one. They lived on earth looking for the life above this life. Some may say they were so heavenly minded they were no earthly good but that is a lie. It is only those whose mind is fixed on heaven who are

really any good on earth. Everyone else whose mind is fixed on this temporary life are selfish and worship self.

How do you live as a stranger and pilgrim? You remember every day that this world is not your home. The world system is opposed to God's kingdom. Everything in the world system is a counterfeit of God's kingdom. Government, business, and society world structures take care of man's fleshly needs but kill the spirit in man.

It is only those living for heaven that God says he is not ashamed of. People who confess they believe in God but live like there is no other life than this one do not bring glory to God. It does not bring glory to God to live a self-centered life. It does not bring glory to God to be self-absorbed in your own provision and protection. When people live like this they are their own portion. But for those who live for God's kingdom the Lord is their portion.

We can only love the city of God if the Lord reveals it to us. God revealed this city to those who looked forward to it. God revealed it to us in scripture. Read about this city of God in the book of Revelation. The apostle John saw this city.

Read about it and ask the Lord to make that city real to you. Desire the better country that is before us. Do not live for the temporary life but instead store up your treasure in heaven. Where your treasure is your heart will be also. If you focus on getting treasure on earth then that is where your heart will be. Instead, invest your life in what will count in eternity.

11:17-22

These verses contain the history of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. This covers most of the book of Genesis in scope.

Notice the faith of Abraham is demonstrated by his willingness to sacrifice what he loved most, his son, Isaac. God gave Isaac to Abraham. Abraham reasoned if God asked him to sacrifice Isaac then God would raise Isaac from the dead. God promised Abraham's descendants would come through Isaac. See how a man can take God's word, and using reason and logic, come to conclusions which move him to action. More importantly, we understand that this is a clear picture of God the Father sacrificing his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This was God showing what he would do in the future. I believe Abraham understood exactly what these things meant because in the New Testament Jesus said Abraham saw his day and rejoiced.

The testimony of faith is tied to men blessing their descendants. In their blessing there was a finger pointing to the future fulfillment of God's promises. All their faith rested on the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We have no record of God speaking to Joseph, except through his dreams, but we see he believed the word which God spoke to his fathers. Joseph's instructions regarding his bones showed he believed the promise God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Today our faith must rest on God's word. We should not create an imaginary god to put our faith in. We should not put faith in faith. We should not put faith in ourselves. We should instead put our faith in God's word. God's word and his promise is all found in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus is the

sum of God's word and all his promises to us. Have faith in God. Have faith in what God said. Have faith in God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day, according to the scriptures.

11:23-26

Notice the pattern of people with faith. Their faith saw something in the future. Moses had "respect unto the recompense of the reward". This is similar to Abraham who saw a city with foundations whose builder was God. Both of their faith was on something in the future. Their faith was in an invisible kingdom to appear in the future. Moses was willing to suffer affliction in this life because he was living for something in the future. How strange this faith is to the modern American gospel.

Moses turned his back on everything the world offered him. He had opportunity to be at the top of the world system pyramid but instead made a choice to be with those who lived outside the world system. You could not get more outside the world system than the Hebrew slaves. They were in a position completely outside the world system. This was according to God's will. God will put everyone outside the world system that he chooses as his own. Moses learned to live outside the world system by faith. He suffered because of his faith. He suffered affliction with the people of God.

The people of God suffer in the world system. They always suffer. As Paul wrote: "*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*" (2 Timothy 3:12).

The pleasure of sin is for a short season. The pleasure of sin is temporary and does not last. It is fading away. This reminds me of another verse which confirms this truth for us. Read 1 John 2:15-17.

Those who have Biblical faith will shun the world system. They will turn away from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Instead, they will turn by faith to Jesus and turn to God in repentance. They will deny themselves, and take up their cross, and follow Jesus.

11:27-29

Moses left the world system because he had faith in the God he could not see. He could not see God but he could hear God's voice speaking to him. Moses did not fear the Pharaoh, king of Egypt, but instead he had respect and fear of God who spoke to him.

When God revealed to Moses how he would bring Israel out of Egypt Moses may not have understood God's method but he obeyed. This is the pattern in the Bible. God speaks to a man and the man obeys even if he does not understand what God is doing. He does what God says and the Lord will do the impossible. God brought Israel out of Egypt. How did he do this? He had Israel celebrate the pass over which included the sprinkling of a lamb's blood over the door of each Hebrew household.

As the account of Moses and Israel continued they came to the Red Sea. This is another picture of salvation from the world. We came out of the world but we also have to die to the world. Israel going through the Red Sea was a picture of death and resurrection. Israel was raised to a new life through what brought death to Pharaoh's army. This is the same picture we see with Noah's flood. The same thing that brought salvation to Noah and his family destroyed the world.

These pictures of death and resurrection and of salvation through what destroys the world was a prophecy of the gospel. It portrayed the crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. God himself placed us into Christ Jesus. We died with him on the cross, we were buried in him, and we were raised together with him to walk in a new life. God says to forget the past and to look toward the new life that we have in his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

11:30-31

The walls of Jericho falling down was recorded in Joshua chapter 6. The falling of the walls of Jericho was a miracle from God. As much as it was a miracle that God parted the Red Sea for Israel to travel across so also was the falling of the walls of Jericho. In this battle Israel believed in the word of God and did as they were told. Their part was to believe God's word and walk around the city of Jericho. God did the rest.

We see this pattern through the Bible. God puts his children into impossible situations and asks them to believe his word. When we believe God's word then we see God do a miracle. The Lord knocks down the walls of Jericho. Our part is to believe.

This can be applied to our personal life. We will find ourselves in situations that are over our head. Life can become too difficult to manage. During these times we should simply rest in God's word, trust in the Lord with all of our heart, and see what the Lord will do.

Does this faith imply a passive life? Do we just sit back and do nothing? In the case of the walls of Jericho God had them do something. He had them marching around the city, making music, and praising the Lord.

There may be something God has for us to do and from what I see in the bible many times what God tells us to do may not make sense to the world. We simply believe God, however, and do what he says to do. We leave the results up to God.

But, what if God does not deliver us? Then we say with Job, "the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." No matter what happens our part is to believe and give glory to God by trusting in him. Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day.

11:32-35

Throughout Hebrews the apostle used examples and principles from the Old Testament to prove his point. Here he continued to show us that believers in the Old Testament were saved and pleased God in the same way we do today. We please God by having faith.

In this list we see believers obtained victory in various situations. They won whatever battle they were in. We have the example of the woman whose son was raised from the dead by Elisha. These people were examples of faith and they were commended for their faith. The result of their faith was great victory and deliverance.

However, as we see, those who did not obtain victory were also commended for their faith. Some of them did not accept temporary victory, but instead looked forward to the ultimate victory in God's

kingdom. This is a faith which went beyond temporary victory in the here and now. It was a faith that was not moved by circumstances in this temporary life. It is a faith rooted and grounded in the kingdom. It is grounded and set on the solid foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a faith that is a true anchor for the soul.

We see then that faith cannot be judged by outward circumstances. Some who appear to be poor in this world are actually rich in faith. There are people who appear to be rich in this world but who are poor in their faith. The Lord Jesus addressed this in **Revelation 3:14-19**.

11:36-40

This is the second group. The first group obtained deliverance and victory. This second group suffered and were persecuted and died for their faith. They did not have success in this world, but were commended just as those who did obtain success. Again, this teaches us that faith cannot be evaluated based on outward circumstances of the believer. Faith is not evaluated based on success in the world. Faith is not about success or failure. It is not about prosperity, health, or wealth. Instead, faith is the ability to see God's kingdom. Faith is how to be reconciled properly to God and receive inheritance in God's kingdom.

The end of these verses stand out to me: "... *that they without us should not be made perfect...*" To me this sounds like the entire body of believers cannot receive full reward until all believers are gathered together. I think this points forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb. There is something in front of us, both for those who already died in faith, and those who are alive and remain. What do we have in front of us yet?

Here are some of the things in front of us: the rapture of the church, the second coming of Christ, the judgment seat of Christ, the marriage supper of the Lamb, the millennial reign of Christ, and the New Jerusalem. These are events described in the Bible and are still in the future for us. These are the events we should look forward to. We should not be living only for this temporary existence in the here and now. Instead, we should look forward to all the Lord has planned for us. We should look forward with hope to all God has prepared for those who believe in him.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Zechariah 14:4; Romans 14:10; Revelation 19:9; Revelation 20:6; Revelation 3:12; 21:2

Hebrews Chapter 12

12:1-2

The cloud of witnesses was a list of those commended for their faith in the previous chapter. They are called witnesses but I think "witnesses" is not about them watching from heaven but that we remember their testimony of faith. Their witness, or testimony, can inspire us to follow their example. We should follow in the footsteps of this cloud of witnesses. How can we follow their testimony? The apostle gave practical instructions on how we can run the Christian race and finish well.

The first thing we can do is lay aside every weight. It is left up to us to apply this to our personal lives. What weight is slowing us down or hindering us from following the example of faith? What do we

have in our lives that hinders our faith in the Lord Jesus? What is stopping us from being productive and fruitful in our testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ? We can examine our heart with the help of the Holy Spirit and no doubt the Lord will show us what is weighing us down. Notice there is a distinction between "every weight" on one hand, and then also "the sin which so easily besets us" on the other hand. This tells me that what is a spiritual "weight" may not necessarily be an obvious sin. Sometimes there are things which are not sin in itself but it still hinders our spiritual walk.

There are some sins which easily beset us. As a result of tolerating spiritual weight we become vulnerable to sin which easily besets us. These are things which trip us up and they should not. They are sins which easily beset us. These sins do not have a hard time finding us. They easily overtake us. In my experience these are the sins we grew up with, whether it be anger, or covetousness, or pride, or something else. The things which we grew up with are the hardest to overcome, and sometimes difficult to even identify. We are accustomed to these sins and easily commit these sins without thinking about it.

However, we have a great cloud of witnesses before us who overcome the spiritual weights and the sin which so easily beset them. We are called to be overcomers. We are not called to be lukewarm. Instead, we are to be fervent in our walk with the Lord. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you identify weights and sins which easily beset you. Lay these things aside. This is the only way we can run this race successfully.

Another part of running this race is keeping our eyes on Jesus. Sin will always direct your gaze inward toward yourself. It will keep you focused on yourself, whether in fear, or anxiety, or doubt, or unbelief. But when we turn away from ourselves and look at Jesus we receive power from heaven to overcome. In order to run this race with patience we must continue to look at Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

The fact that Jesus is the author and the finisher of my faith gives me a lot of encouragement and comfort. It is God who inspired faith in my heart. He was the one who opened my ears so that I could hear his voice. He was the one who opened my spiritual eyes so that I could see his kingdom. The same Lord Jesus who gave me faith to start with will continue to supply me day by day with the grace I need to walk with him and one day arrive at the desired haven of rest.

How did Jesus endure? He saw the joy in front of him and so overcame the cross. This shows us that one of the greatest weapons in overcoming is found in joy. No wonder the apostle Paul told us to "*Rejoice evermore*", and to "*rejoice in the Lord always*". **1 Thessalonians 5:16, Philippians 4:4.**

The Lord Jesus overcame and sat down at the right hand of God. We are called to be overcomers and sit down with the Lord Jesus. In order to do this we must be diligent to remove anything that hinders the Holy Spirit. Pray and ask God to give you a willing spirit and heart to obey him in everything he says.

12:3-8

We are encouraged to consider what the Lord Jesus endured on our behalf. In this context, the purpose of considering the Lord Jesus is to help us have the correct perspective during trials. We can assume when we go through trials that we are being corrected. Many times I do not know what I am being corrected for, but we can rest assured that God sees what he is doing. We don't have to always

understand everything, but we can make a decision to trust in God's word. It is encouraging to me to realize that suffering has a purpose. That purpose is to make us more like the Lord Jesus Christ. Considering the Lord encourages us to have a bigger perspective on circumstances.

Weariness comes from a lack of perspective. If we can understand the purpose of our circumstances it will help us endure. When people lack the knowledge of "why" they often become weary in their minds. Here we have one reason why we suffer. It is for our correction. Correction is needed so that we may be like the Lord Jesus Christ. Isn't this the goal of the Christian life? Why do you call yourself a Christian? Don't you want to be like the Lord Jesus Christ? Correction will help us attain the goal of becoming like the Lord Jesus.

People who hate correction do not see the value in it. They do not see the value in it because they have no higher goal in life than their own personal comfort or pleasure. Anyone whose goal is comfort and pleasure will never succeed as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If a man wants to be a great craftsman he will need to put in the dirt time. He has to get his hands dirty with his hammer, or saw, or whatever tool he uses in his trade. In the spiritual life, God uses difficult circumstances to hone our spiritual skills. We learn to be loving, and patient, and kind, and humble, and forgiving. These qualities are not natural to men. They must be learned from the Holy Spirit in the school of suffering and hardship.

Do not despise the work of God in your life. It is easy to become discouraged, it is easy to despise the work of God in your life. If we are to benefit from God's work in us we must cooperate and that means having a good attitude. It means to have an attitude of faith that God is at work and that we can trust him. God loves us and he is treating us like a son. Natural fathers train their sons through discipline. How much more does God the Father train us as sons through correction and discipline?

God loves us and will carry on to completion the good work he started in us. The Lord Jesus is the author and the finisher of our faith. He who began this good work in us will be faithful to perform it.

12:9-11

The apostle draws on the common experience of parental discipline to demonstrate our relationship with God and how he deals with us. An earthly father will correct and discipline his son for his own good. However, God corrects us, not only for our good, but also so that we can participate in his nature. How is this possible? Somehow, when the Lord corrects us he also imparts into us something of his own nature so that we can change, and grow, and become more like him.

I have experienced this in my life especially when I was a young Christian. The Lord would correct me, sometimes severely, but it did not discourage or dishearten me. Instead, I would be glad because it would open my eyes to something else about God. I would see something new in my spirit about the Lord. It was worth going through suffering in order to know God better.

This is an idea that is foreign to an unbeliever. Someone who does not have a relationship with God cannot fathom how correction can change us and conform us into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's chastening is not joyful when it happens but afterward it produces a change in us and the more we experience this the more we look forward to the result of our suffering. No one likes to be corrected. No one likes to suffer. But there is good that comes from it when God performs this work in your life. It can cause a man to produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness. This is a life which bears the fruit of the Holy Spirit. **Galatians 5:22.**

To grow spiritually we need to hold onto truth. There will be times if this is not understood the Christian will be in danger of discouragement. Discouragement is a dangerous place for the believer because it attracts the power of darkness. Instead, we need to always maintain an attitude of thankfulness, praise, worship, and faith in God. There will be situations in life that are inexplicable and beyond explanation. It is in those times we must look up and trust that God is at work in us. He has a good plan for our life. He will get us to the desired haven and we must trust in him. Do not give in to unbelief but be strong in faith and give glory to God. Like Job said, *"though he slay me, yet will I trust in him"*.

12:12-17

When I read this it feels like a continuation of the conversation about God's correction. What happens if we accept God's correction and rejoice at God's work in our lives? Then our hands no longer hang down. Our knees receive strength. Our feet are enabled to walk in a straight path and we are no longer lame like the man who does not know the Lord. We are healed. We are able to have peace with men and be holy.

But what happens when we reject God's correction? We fail and miss the grace of God. Bitterness comes in like it did with Esau and the result is a profane life. A man who rejects correction sets his mind on his own pleasure and provision like Esau. If we persist in rejecting God's correction then we become incapable of repenting and turning away from the things which destroy us.

Receiving correction is a basic Christian principle. I learned this in the first few weeks I became a Christian. I was taught this by memorizing **Hebrews 13:17**, *"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."* This means to accept correction from leaders. If we cannot receive correction from men how can we receive correction from God? This is tied together. God uses men to correct, teach, and train us. We need to be willing to humble ourselves and be corrected. I have failed in this area many, many times. I always suffer when I fail at this and you would think I would learn my lesson but I've discovered that human nature is intractable.

God loves us and will be faithful to deal with this human nature. He will find ways to humble us for our good. This process never ends. It is as true for me today as it was when I first learned **Hebrews 13:17**. God's discipline never ends until he is completed with us.

Do you want to be healed? Do you want to be made whole? Then let God have his way in your life. Agree with God that he is right and that you are wrong. Humble yourself under God's correction and discipline. **Read James 1:2-4, James 5:11.**

12:18-21

There is a stark contrast between the Christian believer and the Hebrews who gathered around Moses at the mount of God. This contrast promotes the idea that God in the Old Testament was a different God than God in the New Testament. He is not a different God, but he does reveal himself to mankind in a progressive fashion.

We see this progression in relationships. I've never had a job where I started out in a friendly relationship with my employer. There is usually one type of relationship with an employer when you start a job. However, the longer you stay with that job you may find the relationship progresses. You get to know the boss better and sometimes it is possible to become friends with that person.

What Israel saw of God on that mountain was how he wanted to reveal himself to them. He wanted to instill the fear of God. He wanted to bring an entire nation into one heart and mind. He wanted to unite them in a profound fear of God.

We are no longer at that mountain. In the New Testament God did not reveal himself with fire and blackness and darkness and tempest. He revealed himself as a man who was born in a stable, lived a humble life, showed patience, kindness, love, mercy, and ultimately sacrificed himself as an atonement for our sins on the cross.

The Lord continues to teach us about himself. Hebrews exhorts the Hebrew Christians to not cling to the religion of the temple and the Jews. Instead, go forward to know God in the way he was revealing himself through his Son Jesus Christ.

This is a good lesson for us to apply to our lives. I think the apostle Paul summarized this very well. Read **Philippians 3:13-14**.

12:22-24

Under Moses Israel had an earthly tabernacle. Peter tried to build an earthly tabernacle for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. This is all he knew. But the Lord was doing a new thing so God told Peter to listen to what the Lord Jesus said. Listen to God's Son! The Son of God is pointing us to the heavenly Jerusalem. He is pointing us to something higher than any earthbound religion, spiritual shadow, or type. He is inviting us to participate in a relationship with the living God!

In **Revelation 21** John spoke of the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. This is where we are heading as children of God. We are heading toward this heavenly new Jerusalem.

Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant. The old covenant under Moses was fulfilled through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Now we are in the new covenant, which is a covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ. Now it is not about what we can do for God but it is about what God has done for us. He gave his Son for us. Our work now is to believe in the Son of God whom the Father sent into the world. Hear him!

God is still speaking today. He wants us to listen to his voice and hear him. He is speaking. He is speaking words to edify, and exhort, and comfort us. Listen to the Lord. His voice is the most important voice you will ever hear. Read **John 10:4**.

12:25-27

The Lord speaks to us in heaven and expects us to listen to him, remember what he says, and receive what he says into our heart. God's word is meant to change us and transform us. God's word comes to cleanse, to make us whole, and to heal us. It saves us, and forgives us, and gives us eternal life.

Notice how careful the Lord instructs Moses to teach Israel not to make any kind of visible image or symbol of God to worship. The true God is invisible to the eye of fallen mankind. The true God can only be known by hearing and listening to his voice. When men looked at the plain carpenter from Nazareth they did not see God. But when they listened to his voice and the words he spoke, then they heard God speaking. Never man spoke like this man!

When God visited Adam and Eve the Bible says that the voice of the Lord walked with them in the garden. The voice of the Lord! How many times did the prophets say that the people did not obey the voice of the Lord their God?

Jesus said his sheep hear his voice. God is speaking. Those who belong to the Lord hear his voice. Do not refuse him! Do not reject the word of God today. The Lord is speaking to you today.

The word which we stand on is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day, according to the scriptures.

The Lord speaks continually to each believer. As we hear him then we accept what he says and we humble ourselves. Many times the word the Lord speaks will correct something in your life. Receive God's word. Say to the Lord, "You are right, Lord! I am wrong." Acknowledge that God's word is true and renounce all your own opinions and feelings. Embrace the word of God and humble yourself under God's word.

God will speak one day and everything in creation will be unmade except that which is eternal. On that day only the souls of redeemed mankind will live and everything else will melt away. God will make a new heavens and a new earth where we will live with the Lord forever.

12:28-29

The Lord is a consuming fire. The truth should give us pause. Shouldn't we learn the fear of God from a verse like this? Shouldn't this at least give us a minute to stop and think about what this means? God is a consuming fire.

We see this on the mountain when God gave commandments to Moses. He was a fire on that mountain. He also revealed himself to Moses in a burning bush. He was a fire that burned but did not consume the bush.

The Lord is a refining fire. He is a fire that brings judgment to destroy the wicked, but a fire which removes the sin from the believer. His fire burns away all that is of sin, self, the world, and the devil. Our God is a consuming fire.

Those who trust in the Lord Jesus and believe the gospel of his death, burial, and resurrection receive a kingdom which cannot be removed. The fire of God's judgment will remove everything and will in that place establish a kingdom which cannot be moved or consumed. The eternal kingdom of God is coming. It cannot be held back. All the kingdoms of this world will pass away but the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ will endure forever.

We should serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Serving God is not a joke or a sermon to make you laugh. Serving God is not entertainment to make you feel good. It is our duty. We should serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. God is a consuming fire. Read **1 Peter 1:7**. God's fire removes everything that will hinder us from being ready for the rapture. May the Lord complete the work of his fire in our lives so that our soul and spirit will be filled with the Holy Ghost and looking steadfastly for the return of the Lord Jesus. May God send revival again and that all of the dross and compromise and hypocrisy and backsliding in our lives will be consumed in God's fire. Our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews Chapter 13

13:1-4

The reality of angels is acknowledged in these verses. This was put in the context of hospitality, which brought to my mind the account of Lot when he showed hospitality to the angels who brought God's wrath on Sodom. It also reminded me of the angelic visitations to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses and Joshua. Throughout the Bible there are accounts of the activity of these agents of the Lord. It is no use denying the reality that God sends angels to do his work on the earth. It is possible to come into contact with an angel and not be aware of it. It is possible at some point in your life you might have an encounter with an angel and not even know it.

The apostle encouraged the church to remember those who were in bonds. This meant to remember those who were in prison. I once thought this meant we should have a prison ministry. There is nothing wrong with a prison ministry. I think in the context of Hebrews this was speaking more specifically of Christians who were in prison or suffering for faith in Jesus. We should remember brothers and sisters in Christ around the world who suffer for their faith in the Lord Jesus. Pray that their faith will be strong and that God will supply their needs, protect them, and be their portion. I've made this a habit in my everyday prayers to remember the persecuted church.

marriage was mentioned and God's wrath on those who do not honor marriage. Our society is filled with people who have no respect for marriage, but instead just live together, have children, and then maybe get married as an afterthought. Most of the younger generation have no clue how far away from the Bible they live and were never taught any different. Ignorance does not mean the Lord will not deal with these sins. The Lord will deal with our disobedience to his word.

May the Lord help us show hospitality, remember those who are suffering, and honor marriage. What do these verses have in common? These are basic building blocks of family and society. We should follow the pattern the Lord gave us in his word. When everyone understands the Bible and puts it into practice we will have peace. Without God's word people live in spiritual darkness and do not understand why their life is so difficult.

13:5-8

The word "conversation" in the King James Bible means "lifestyle". Our lifestyle should not typify covetousness. Does your appearance, home, or transportation reflect an attitude that you love the things of the world? Do you like to have something better than your neighbor? You are covetous. We are instructed to rid our life of a covetous attitude. Instead, we should train ourselves to be content with what we have. Why? Because the Lord is our provider. He will take care of us and provide for us. He is our provider, and protector, and our portion forever.

Since the Lord is our provider and our protector we should never fear what men will do to us. Men inevitably will seek to hurt you or do you in. They do this in order to step on you to elevate and lift themselves up. This is why people are competitive, envious and strive against others. We should never be afraid of what men will do because the Lord said he will never leave or forsake us. The Lord is our helper.

Remember the testimony of those who went before in the faith. Read the testimonies and biographies of Christians, missionaries, and those who gave their life for the gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ. Allow their testimony to inspire you and realize they invested their life in the only thing which will count in eternity. The only thing that will matter is the gospel and the souls of men.

The Lord does not change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We count on the testimony in scripture about God. He will always act in accordance with the revelation in the Bible of who he is. This can comfort, encourage, and also produce the fear of God in us.

13:9-13

As we have seen throughout Hebrews we have a contrast between the old Hebrew religious system and then the new way of life in Christ Jesus. The encouragement is not to be carried about with different kinds of strange doctrines. Why do we have different kinds of strange doctrines?

One reason is because the devil spreads doctrines in the church to lead people astray. One of the biggest false doctrines I have seen in my life is the doctrine of health, wealth, and prosperity. It is known as the prosperity gospel. People in this false doctrine talk a lot about "faith" but their definition of faith is not rooted and grounded in the Bible. Their idea of faith comes from superstition and the occult. I call those who promote this false faith doctrine in the church "christian witchcraft" because the principles are the same as witchcraft but clothed in Christian terminology. It is truly a wolf in sheep's clothing. Name it; claim it. Positive confession. Positive mental attitude. The roots of this is paganism and witchcraft.

You do not see this in the Bible unless you twist scriptures. The Lord Jesus had no place to lay his head. The apostle Paul did most of his ministry from a prison cell or as a slave on a boat that was shipwrecked. We have an entire book in the bible about a prophet whose entire message was that

suffering is allowed by God for a purpose (Job). I understand why people embrace false doctrines so quickly. They come to church and the Bible because they want a better life, or success, or they wanted to be provided for. But people are easily sidetracked into becoming covetous and self-worshippers. Today self worship is actively promoted by mega churches and many popular preachers in America. It is satanic and goes a long way to explain the condition our nation is now in as a result.

We are not to participate in this fake Christianity. Instead, we are to join the Lord Jesus outside this evil religious system. We join him outside the building and accept the fact we will be misunderstood, slandered, attacked, persecuted, and perhaps might face becoming a martyr for the gospel. May the Lord give us the courage to be strong in faith and to endure patiently and with joyfulness.

13:14-16

Here we have no continuing city but we seek one to come. Think about this. What is this teaching us? It is teaching us not to live for the current life. The current life we have now on earth in these clay vessels does not take priority. Instead, another life that is in the future, a life in a new city with a new kingdom is the focus. What do people teach today, though? Just the opposite. Christian preachers in America today focus on the present, on improving self in this current life. They do not preach about the kingdom of God that is coming. They do not preach about the New Jerusalem that is coming. Their entire focus is on helping people live for this current life of pleasure, experience, and provision. This is not the focus of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ or the apostles. The teaching in the New Testament is about a view of a kingdom which is coming in the future. It is about living for that kingdom rather than for this current world system. This current world system focuses on provision, money, taking care of your flesh, protecting yourself. It revolves around the self life. The kingdom of God, however, revolves around the Lord Jesus Christ.

We can live for this kingdom right now. As a matter of fact, the Lord Jesus Christ commands his followers to start right now living for the kingdom of God rather than for self and the world system. **Matthew 6:33**, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*"

If you are risen with Christ then you should seek the kingdom of God. What does this tell you about the religious people who promote self-improvement? **Colossians 3:1**, "*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*"

13:17-19

This verse was one I learned when I was a new Christian. I was given this verse to memorize so that I would understand my duty to obey my leaders. Obedience and submission to authority is an important subject in the Bible. Without obedience and submission we will never realize a life of purpose or victory in the Lord.

The Lord Jesus is the greatest example of obedience and submission. He obeyed the heavenly Father. He listened to what God told him to do and then he did it. He humbled himself and was obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God exalted him to the highest place.

When we obey our leaders it makes their job easier. When we make their job easier then it is better for us. It will create difficulty for ourselves if we give our leaders a hard time.

This is a simple lesson but so hard to understand and apply in every day life situations. It is one of the first verses I learned, and it is something I still have not been able to master or apply to my life on a consistent basis.

13:20-25

These concluding verses reiterate the gospel: Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day, according to the scriptures. In the book of Hebrews we start with the Lord Jesus Christ, we read about him throughout this book, and now this book concludes with the blood of the everlasting covenant.

God loved us and sent his Son into this world to die on a cross in our place. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. (**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**).

Jesus is the great shepherd of the sheep. Everyone who belongs to him hears his voice and follows him. They will not follow religious systems but they will follow the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our leader. He is the great shepherd of our souls.

The work of salvation is a work God did for us, and he continues to work in us to complete this good work. He will carry on this good work until completion. (**Philippians 1:6**). He will make us well pleasing in his sight.

May the Lord use this commentary on Hebrews to edify, exhort, and comfort the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. To God be all the glory, honor, and praise. Amen.

Mike Kines
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